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RISE OF THE CHRISTIAN POWER IN INDIA

BY

Major B. D. BASU, I. M. S. (*Retired*)

VOL. I

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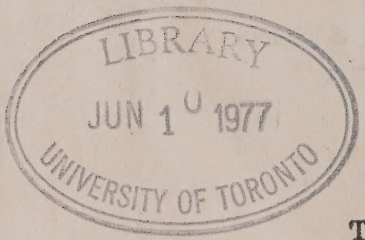

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Dedicated

to

The Beloved Memories

of those

without whose inspiration,

encouragement and help,

this work

could not have been written.

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Preface

I. Materials for the History of British India.
II. Fallacies and Problems.
III. Explanation of the use of the term "*The Christian Power*".
The perusal of Mr. Torrens' *Empire in Asia, How we came by it, A book of Confessions*, recommended as preliminary to the study of this work.

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PREFACE.

Materials for the History of British India.

"History must from time to time be rewritten, not because many new facts have been discovered, but because new aspects come into view, because the participant in the progress of an age is led to standpoints from which the past can be regarded and judged in a novel manner."

—Goethe.

"History, so far, has been the most immoral and perverting branch of literature. It exalts greed and wholesale murder when greedy and murderous lusts are satisfied in the names of nations. Fraud is taken as evidence of clever diplomacy. What is counted immoral down low is held admirable in Courts and on Thrones."—M. Hervé.

History is not mainly a science which proceeds by analysis; it is the attempt to collect and arrange in a living picture an enormous mass of detail. Too rigid definitions, like lines which are too hard and marked, spoil the total effect."

—Merz's *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1, p. 5.

"I have learnt that in mathematics we have to rely on genius, in physics on experiment, in law human and divine, on authority, IN HISTORY, ON TESTIMONY."—Leibniz.

"We must try to separate fiction from falsification, and strain our gaze so as to recognise the lineaments of truth liberated from those retouchings. The removal of the

fabulous, the destruction of what is deceiving, may satisfy the critic ; he only desires to expose a deceptive story..... The historian, however, requires something positive ; he must discover at least some probable connection and put a more plausible narrative in the place of that which he has had to sacrifice to his conviction."—Niebuhr.

A good historian should consult authors who have spoken of events, the archives in which unpublished documents are found, the newspapers, private letters, memoirs and even tradition. He has to gather probabilities from every source and then compare these probabilities, and weigh and discuss them before deciding. Unfortunately, India does not possess a reliable history of her past or even of modern times. It is not necessary to refer to the period of remote antiquity. During the British period of her existence, India has not produced any one who would take the trouble of writing a true history of her past and present.*

* Regarding the want of a proper history of Ireland Lecky writes :—

"That proportion of the national talent and scholarship which ought in every country to be devoted to elucidating the national history, has in Ireland not been so employed. .....Irish history is shamefully chaotic, undigested, and unelaborated and it presents in this respect a most humiliating contrast to the history of Scotland. The explanation is very obvious. For a long period the classes who possessed almost a

To Expect a true and reliable history of India from the natives of England is almost an impossibility.* This is not to be

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monopoly of education and wealth, regarded themselves as a garrison in a foreign and a conquered country.....The highest literary talent was accordingly diverted to other channels, and Irish history has passed to a lamentable extent into the hands of religious polemics, of dishonest partisans, and of half-educated and uncritical enthusiasts."

—Lecky's History of England, second edition, Vol. II, (1879), page 288.

* "Each nation, in the main, writes its own history best: it best knows its own land, its own institutions, the relative importance of its own events, the characters of its own great men. But each nation has its peculiarities of view, its prejudices, its self-love, which require to be corrected by the impartial or even hostile view of others."

—Goldwin Smith's Lectures on the Study of History, 2nd edition, pp. 37-38.

"History cannot furnish its own inductive law. An induction, to be sound, must take in, actually or virtually, all the facts before her. What is past she knows in part; what is to come she knows not, and can never know. The scroll from which she reads is but half unrolled: and what the other half contains, what even the next line contains, no one has yet been able to foretell."

—Do, p. 56.

"If all mankind were one State, with one set of customs, one literature, one code of laws, and this State became

wondered at. "Politics and history", wrote the learned Professor Sir J. A. Seely, "are only different aspects of the same study."* The

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corrupted, what remedy, what redemption would there be? None but a convulsion which would rend the frame of society to pieces, and deeply injure the moral life which society is designed to guard. Not only so, but the very idea of political improvement might be lost, and all the world might become more dead than China. Nations redeem each other. They preserve for each other principles, truths, hopes, aspirations, which, committed to the keeping of one nation only, might, as frailty and error are conditions of man's being, become extinct for ever. They not only raise each other again when fallen, they save each other from falling. They support each other's steps by sympathy and example; they moderate each other's excesses and extravagances and keep them short of the fatal point by the mutual action of opinion, when the action of opinion is not shut out by despotic folly". Do, p. 71.

"History is a series of struggles to elevate the character of humanity in all its aspects, religious, intellectual, social, political, rising sometimes to an agony of aspiration and exertion, and frequently followed by lassitude and relapse, as great moral efforts are in the case of individual men. Those who espouse the theory of necessary developments as the key to history are driven to strange consequences." Do, p: 95.

* Professor Goldwin Smith, as represented by Mr. Freeman, also considered "history but past politics, and that

habits of thought of the natives of England have been mainly formed by political life. Hence the observations of Lecky are just to the point. In his work on Rationalism in Europe, Lecky writes :—

"The object of the politician is expediency.....A disinterested love of truth can hardly co-exist with a strong political spirit. In all countries where the habits of thought have been mainly formed by political life, we may discover a disposition to make expediency the test of truth."

The histories of India written by Englishmen are one-sided and not reliable. It could not have been otherwise. For, a true historian should be a philosopher, which the English are not.

"The object", writes Mr. Lecky, "of the philosopher is truth ;.....Nothing can be more fatal in politics than a preponderance of the philosophical spirit.....It is probable that the capacity for pursuing abstract truth for its own sake, which has given German thinkers so great an ascendency in Europe, is in no slight degree to be attributed to the political languor of their nation."

If the English were to turn philosophers, then the political languor of their nation would set in.

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politics are but present history." Freeman's Methods of Historical Study page 8.

Hence the people reared on politics very often make 'history the prostitute of politics."

Even their greatest philosopher, Mr. Herbert Spencer, whom John Stuart Mill styled "the boldest thinker that English speculation has yet produced," is not free from the bias of political spirit. This has been proved to demonstration by the late American socialist writer Mr. Henry George in his work, named "A perplexed philosopher." It is not politically expedient and it is not to their interest that Englishmen should write a true account of the history of India. It is unfortunate also that Indians have not written any complete history of their country.

English authors have spread erroneous views of Indian history, have told their tale very prettily, and in a way which pleases the taste of their countrymen and countrywomen, and that class of readers have accepted it, true or false. It is, therefore, that Indian authors have an uphill fight to wage, for they have to champion truth against falsehood.

But the difficulties of the Indian historian of the British period are much enhanced from the fact that most of the political events and transactions of that period have been described by Englishmen. "It has become almost a proverb", writes Mr. Freeman,

"that no two eye-witnesses describe the same event in exactly the same way."*

.....A very little thought will bring any of you to see that absolute certainty is unattainable by the very best historical evidence. Be the witness who he may, there is always the possibility both of error and of falsehood.....The geologist may err in interpreting the witness of the rocks; but the rocks themselves can neither err nor lie. Now, not only may the historian err in interpreting the witness of records, but the records themselves may either err or lie.....†

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* Eye Witnesses not always trustworthy.

"My faith in historical narrative, founded in anything else than personal observation, has been greatly shaken by the numerous instances in which, during the present campaigns, ancedotes apparently trustworthy, have subsequently appeared untrue. The information I collected to add to my own observation of the events just narrated, did not always bear sifting, and several particulars were given me by eye-witnesses, who had the best opportunities of watching the course of events, which on examination of the ground convinced me were erroneous. In these moments of intense interest and excitement, the imagination has undue sway, and gaps are filled up by suppositions adopted merely for their plausibility and convenience, till it is difficult to separate fact from fiction, and the whole assumes the coherent and circumstantial air of perfect truth....."

—From Hamley's Campaign of Sebastopol, 1855.

† The following opinion of the late Professor Huxley, showing the reason why history cannot rank as a science, should be borne in mind by all those who read Indian

We cannot be sure of the past, because its evidence depends on the human will to fix what shall be said to have happened."

Imagine the difficulties then of the historian who has to sift truth from a mass of records writ-

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history written by British authors The British writers of Indian history not only lack in sympathy with, but being ignorant also of the customs, manners and languages of the natives of India, cannot fully understand their social institutions and do justice to their motives and comprehend their peculiar situations. Consequently the works on Indian History written by them are not trustworthy.

"For the most part, we learn history from the colorless compendiums or partisan briefs of mere scholars, who have too little acquaintance with practical life, and too little insight into speculative problems to understand that about which they write. In historical science, as in all sciences which have to do with concrete phenomona, laboratory practice is indispensable, and the laboratory practice of historical science is afforded, on the one hand, by active social and political life, and on the other, by the study of those tendencies and operations of the mind which embody themselves in philosophical and theological systems. Thucydides and Tacitus, and, to come nearer our own time, Hume and Grote, were men of affairs, and had acquired, by direct contact with social and political history in the making, the secret of understanding how such history is made."

—Huxley's article on Scientific and Pseudo-scientific Realism in the *Nineteenth Century* for February, 1887.

ten by men of a race and creed who, having been nurtured on politics, define history to be "past politics" and, therefore, are not guided by "a disinterested love af truth" in writing history, for if not they themselves, at least their friends, relatives and predecessors played a conspicuous part in the "past politics" of India.*

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* "I believe it was a French King who, wishing to consult some historical work called to his librarian :—"Bring me my liar." The characterization was startling but not undeserved. The more we look round at the world's affairs and the statements made about them by this or that class of people, the more we are impressed by the difficulty, and in some cases the impossibility, of getting at the essential facts.

.....

"What must we think about historical statements at large ? When twelve of England's chief newspapers, representing all parties, joined in a chorus of condemnation—when no newspaper was found which failed thus to join in reprobating the South (United States)—a conclusive proof of sympathetic feeling with the North was given. Yet in the North this conclusive proof was followed by diatribes against our assumed sympathy with the South. If this extreme perversion was possible in the days of a cheap Press and easy communication, what was not possible in past days when the means of spreading information were smaller and the hatreds greater ? Beyond accounts of kings' reigns, of battles, and of incidents named in the chronicles of all the

The historian must be not only a mere chronicler of facts and events and make his mind simply the mirror of reality, but he should possess the qualifications of a philosopher and scientist. He should observe and record facts, and also try to explain them. Like a scientist, he should attempt at the classification, generalization and explana-

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nations concerned, we have nothing to depend on but treaties made to be broken, despatches of corrupt and lying officials, gossiping letters of courtiers and so forth. How from these materials shall we distil the truth ?....."

—Herbert Spencer's Facts and Comments.

"Had the facts of History been like the phenomena of the physical world—had it been possible to approach the study of human nature with minds unprejudiced by passion or by sentiment—these venial tendencies to error would have soon corrected themselves. There would have been nothing to gain by misrepresentation, whether wilful or unconscious, and both writers and readers would have learnt to prefer truth to fiction. They were far advanced on the right road, and they had only to follow out completely the method on which they had begun, and imagination would have been reduced to its proper function of apprehending and realising the varieties of character and circumstances on which the correct delineation of actions and events depend."—Froude.

Again to quote the same author :—

"We are as far as ever from forming impartial judgments, and facts partially stated are not facts at all.....

"But for the present I object to all historical theories. I

tion of facts and endeavour to detect in the past events the expression of general principles and laws. Like the scientist, the historian also should frame hypotheses and theories to explain events.*

No scientist can frame even plausible theories, unless he is gifted with what Tyndall styled scientific imagination. The historian should also pos-

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object to them as calculated to vitiate the observation of facts without which such speculations are not worth the paper on which they are written. I said at the beginning that neither history, nor any other knowledge, could be obtained except by scientific methods.....A surface which is perfectly smooth renders back line for line the forms reflected on it ; but what kind of notion should we have of the full moon and the stars, if we had seen nothing but the images of them on a lake which was rippled, however faintly, by a breeze ?" —Froude.

* "Hypotheses are to be held provisionally, subject to modification and abandonment, in so far as they may from time to time prove inconsistent with the results of further experimental research. On the other hand, when hypotheses embrace and explain extensive ranges of phenomona, when experiment confirms the results they foreshadow, when successive discoveries raise them higher and higher in the scale of probability, they lose more and more their provisional character, and gradually assume the name and rank of *theories*, till at last they come to be embodied permanently among the recognised doctrines of philosophy and science."—Professor Hofmann.

sess scientific imagination to guide him in historical researches and explain the events.* Hence, it is not correct to say that history "can have no presuppositions, her province is to recall and to construct, and she demands from the historian to make his mind simply the mirror of reality, the surrender of his judgment to the decree of the ages, not the projection of his fancies into a region that has for ever passed from the limit of creation, dead to the action and the storm of life, whose tranquil expanse no breath of thought can ruffle, and when the charm is broken when the mirror is moved."

The possession of scientific imagination is absolutely necessary for the historian who aspires to write the history of India during the British supremacy ; for he has to work with imperfect materials. There are missing links in the chain of evidence for the theory known as Darwin's ; it is scientific imagination which is indented upon in filling up the hiatus. So the historian of British India will have to face many links missing in the chain of evidence to explain historical events ; for there

* The well-known historian Mommsen truly consideted imagination to be "the author of all history as of all poetry."

are many State documents which he cannot get access to. Of the published records it is only necessary to say that they are not always absolutely trustworthy. Mr. Grant Duff in his "History of the Marathas," writes :—

"The records of the Company's Government in India are, probably, the best historical materials in the world : there we find the reasons for every undertaking ; ... . the deliberations of the Council, the separate opinions of the members composing it, and their final judgement."

The records of the East India Company, it is hardly necessary to repeat, are not trustworthy. Even Grant Duff admits that

"many services, performed without any great degree of exertion or ability, have, in consequence of their results been extravagantly praised, and given a tone to Indian dispatches which prejudices sober judgment."*

* Mr. James Mill, father of the celebrated John Stuart Mill, whose History of British India Lord Macaulay considered to be "the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon," speaks in the following terms of the truthful character of the records of the East India Company :—"*Under the skill which the Court of Directors have all along displayed in suppressing such information as they wished not to appear*", *etc.*

In the advertisement to the Second Edition of "A History of the Sikhs by Captain Joseph Davey Cunningham," Mr. Peter Cunningham, under whose supervision it was published in 1853, wrote :—

A certain Christian writer has said that

"Virtue is a female ; as long as she is private property, she is excellent, but public virtue, like a public lady, now leans to this, now to that, according to the wind, and consequently wise men hate her."

It must be rememberd that even in private correspondence, Europeans have not been very scrupulous in their regard for truth. The late Principal Caird in his address on the scientific character of Bacon delivered to the students of the University of Glasgow on 20th November, 1880, observed that

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"The printed materials for the recent History of India are not of that character on which historians can rely. State Papers, presented to the people by both houses of Parliament, have been altered to suit the temporary views of political warfare, or abridged out of mistaken regard to the tender feelings of survivors."

To support his contention the Editor quoted the following passage from Kaye's History of the Afghan War:

"The character and career of Alexander Burnes have both been misrepresented in those collections of State Papers which are supposed to furnish the best materials of history but which are often only one-sided compilations of garbled documents,—counterfeits, which the ministerial stamp forces into currency, defrauding a present generation, and handing down to posterity a chain of dangerous lies." (Kaye, Afghanistan, ii, 13).

"private letters and diaries are not always trustworthy exponents of character. Many men posture artificially, even in their familiar correspondence, and the moral sentiments and pious meditations of secret journals are not seldom composed with a half conscious view to posthumous reputation and the purposes of the biographer."

If private records are not above suspicion, how can one expect public and political records to be trustworthy and reliable ? One should, at the same time, remember that "politics hath no conscience." Or as the historian Mr. Freeman has said :

"when we come to manifestoes, proclamations, diplomatic documents which have not yet reached the stage of treaties, the case is wholly different. Here we are in the very chosen region of lies ; everybody is by the nature of the case, trying to overreach everybody else."

Then Mr. Freeman truly observes :

"yet they are instructive lies ; they are lies told by people who know the truth ; truth may even, by various processes, be got out of the lies ; but it will not be got out of them by the process of believing them. He is of childlike simplicity indeed who believes every royal proclamation or the preamble of every Act of Parliament. as telling us, not only what certain august persons did, but the motives which led them to do it."

Thus, then, the historian of British India has to extract truth out of documents which lie. To do the task properly he has to draw upon imagination and intuition or inner consciousness, in the same

manner, and to the same extent, as a scientific man does. But then history should not be built on the sands of theory and events should not be conceived as convenient for some favorite political doctrine. The historian should lay the foundation on the solid rock of original research by patiently studying contemporary records * which, although they lie, yet enable us to

"reach that high degree of likelihood which we call moral certainty, that approach to certainty on which reasonable men are content to act even in the gravest concerns of life... And this kind of evidence, evidence on which men act every day, evidence on which we stake our fortunes, our honor and our lives is the kind of evidence which we get in our

---

* "Contemporary writers do not, it is stated, get beyond mere records of events, records at once one-sided, incomplete, and confusing. It is indeed necessary to have the records in great number and variety: because the true and real record can only be given by him who combines all these many records into one, who avoids the errors arising from special points of view, from narrowness of outlook, from individual ignorance, blindness, or prejudice. Still, in spite of such defects, the contemporary records will always remain the most valuable sources for the future historian who may succeed in sifting their various testimonies, combining and utilising them to produce a fuller and more consistent picture of the bygone age."

—Merz's History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Vol. I, p. 6.

historical studies.....Our evidence then for the facts of our branch of knowledge or science is less strong than the evidence for the facts of some other branches. But do we not nevertheless know more than some of our neighbours as to the causes of the facts with which we deal? Surely we know more about the human will than we know about Force.....And we can after all make some inferences from the course of those affairs, we can lay down some rules which may almost be called laws and of which I venture to think that we can see the why and because more clearly than we can in the case of physical laws.....If mind is higher than matter, if moral causes are higher than physical, for that very reason they come less under the dominion of rigid rules; their details are by reason of the very height of the subject, less certain than the details of those studies which deal with lower subjects." (Freeman's Lecture on the Nature of Historical Evidence).

The contemporary records written by Indians and uninfluenced by foreigners are very valuable and trustworthy historical evidence and these deserve more attention and credit than they have hitherto attracted. These contemporary records should form what the late Mr. Freeman styled "Original Authorities."* Indian History during

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* The different kinds of historical lies have been very ably summarized by the great Muhammadan historian of ancient India named Alberuni. Muhammadan historians always tried to speak the truth; for it has been said

the British period should be studied in these original authorities as far as available. Original authorities have been defined by the above-named author to be "those writers from whom we have no appeal." Thus then the records written by Indians form original authorities for British Indian History. These records should be compared and deductions and historical inferences should be drawn from them with great judgment and intelligence.

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in the *Koran* : "Speak the truth even if it were against yourselves."

Muhammadans being believers in the *Koran* have tried to act to up it. It is therefore that in the works of Muhammadan historians such true and reliable accounts of the political transactions of the Muhammadan rulers of India are found, which one would seek in vain in the historical works of Christian writers.

ALBERUNI'S INDIA.

The tradition regarding an event which in itself does not contradict either logical or physical laws will invariably depend for its character as true or false upon the character of the reporters, who are influenced by the divergency of interests and all kinds of animosities and antipathies between the various nations. We must distinguish different classes of reporters.

One of them tells a lie, as intending to further an interest of his own, either by *lauding* his family or nation, be-

Then again some importance should be attached to traditions and legends and anecdotes. Historical criticism demands that great caution should be exercised in handling legends and anecdotes. Very possibly these have to be rejected altogether, but in doing so, some truth is also

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cause he is one of them, or *by attacking* the family or nation on the opposite side, thinking that thereby he can gain his ends. In both cases he acts from motives of objectionable cupidity and animosity.

Another one tells a lie regarding a class of people whom he likes, as being under obligations to them, or whom he hates because something disagreeable has happened between them. Such a reporter is near akin to the first mentioned one, as he too acts from motives of personal predilection and enmity.

Another tells a lie because he is of such a base nature as to aim thereby at some profit, or because he is such a coward as to be afraid of telling the truth.

Another tells a lie because it is his nature to lie, and he cannot do otherwise, which proceeds from the essential meanness of his character and the depravity of his innermost being.

Lastly, a man may tell a lie from ignorance, blindly following others who told him.

* * * * *

It has been said in the Koran, "*speak the truth, even if it were against yourselves.*" (Sura, 4, 134).

The late Professor Max Muller took great pains to prove

likely to be cast aside. Regarding anecdotes, Mr. Freeman has truly observed that

"they are so largely improved in passing from hand to hand, the bright side of one man, the dark side of another, has its hue so carefully heightened, the probabilities of time and place are so utterly forgotten in the various stages of improvement, that a mere anecdote, as it commonly reaches us, is worth very little. In theory the anecdote is part of our contemporary materials, in practice it is very seldom so."

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that the Hindus are not blackguards and liars as they have been misrepresented by Christian missionaries and Anglo-Indians. His lecture on the "Truthful character of the Hindoos," should be read by all those who have the least suspicion regarding the veracity of the Hindoos. Max Muller concludes his lecture above referred to in the following terms :—

"No one ever accused them (i. e. Hindus) of falsehood. There must surely be some ground for this, for it is not a remark that is frequently made by travellers in foreign countries, even in our time that their inhabitants invariably speak the truth. Read the accounts of English travellers in France, and you will find very little said about French honesty and veracity, while French accounts of England are seldom without a fling at *Perfide Albion* !"

Because Hindus had great regard for truth therefore, they did not attempt to write History, "the prostitute of politics", on the lines of the historians of Christian countries of the West.

The same observations apply equally to legends and traditions.

To the historian of India under the Christians, the treaties are of the highest importance. History should be studied with them. To quote Mr Freeman,

"treaties are not meant to deceive as to mere facts ; each side commonly knows the facts too well for that. For its own purpose therefore a treaty ranks among sources of the very highest authority for historical knowledge."

Mr. Freeman warns us against placing much faith in the language of the treaties. He writes :—

"When the parties to a treaty make any very exalted professions as to their motives, when they express any very fervent affection either towards each other or towards each other's subjects, we feel somewhat as a wary magistrate feels when counsel begin to take a very high moral tone ; he knows that there is some hole in the argument, and he looks about to see where the hole is."

It is on these lines and with these historical materials, then, that the history of British India should be studied. The records bearing on Indian history and written by Englishmen and other Christians should be made use of with the precautions and warnings set forth above.

Why the task of writing a true history of British India is a very difficult one has been thus

mentioned by the late Sir W. W. Hunter in the *Times* of February, 1897 :—

"A true history of the Indian people under British rule has still to be pieced together from the archives of a hundred distant record rooms, with a labour almost beyond the powers of any single man, and at an expense almost beyond the reach of an ordinary private fortune."

Lord Rosebery, writing of the Irish question, says :—"It (the Irish question) has never passed into history, for it has never passed out of politics." But the Indian question, that is, the process by which India passed into the hands of the Europeans, has never gone through politics ; that is, it never formed the subject of 'contemporary party strife.' Party politics greatly help history, for it is in this manner only that all the facts of a case are brought to light, and thus history is written in all its true bearings. No period of the British rule in India excepting that of Warren Hastings has ever been subjected to minute scrutiny by the party politicians of England. Indian questions never interested the people or the political leaders of England. The easiest way to clear the Houses of the English Parliament of their members and spectators is to discuss any Indian question there. No sooner is any Indian question brought for discussion before

the House than the members run in haste out of the precincts of the Parliament. It has been a well-known fact that Secretaries of State for India have session after session presented their annual Indian Budget to empty Houses. Such being the fact, it is no wonder that the construction of the History of India during the Christian rule is so very difficult, because the materials are wanting. The records are not to be relied upon, because they were written by Christians, who took pride in painting non-Christians in the blackest color possible. So the British Period of Indian History can never be perfect, if we confine our sole attention to, and place implicit faith in, the the contemporary records by the British. We have to challenge the truthfulness of those records and not only critically, but sceptically, examine their contents.

It was not difficult for Washington Irving and Prescott to write true accounts of the conquest of the different countries of America by the Christian Spaniards, but it would not be easy for any one to write a true history of the acquisition of India by the Christian English.

The Spaniards were Roman Catholic Christians. Amongst Roman Catholics there is an institution known as "Confession". They have to confess

their sins, their iniquities and their crimes to a priest. Thus they come to reflect on their conduct and so generally reform themselves. They are not quite hardened sinners and their consciences also are therefore not quite dead. It is due to this fact that the Spanish conquerors of Mexico and Peru have left a true record of their deeds in the American Continent. In their old age and on their death-beds they confessed the misdeeds which they had been guilty of, in conquering Mexico and Peru. Hence, not much difficulty was experienced by the historians who wrote on the conquest of Mexico and Peru.

But the case is quite different with the nations of England. They belong to the Protestant sect of Christianity. They have no institution of "confessions". Clive and Warren Hastings have not left any account of their misdeeds.

Undoubtedly, it is the civil and military officers in the employ of the Government of India, who are best qualified to write a true history of India under the British administration. But they dare not do so, for they cannot forget how those who tried it, were punished by the British Government. Captain Cunningham, who wrote the true account of the down-fall of the Sikh Power in

India, was severely punished for his work.* No less pitiable was the fate of Major Evans Bell, who was disgraced and dismissed from the service, for he had the courage to expose the British mal-administration of India. Missionaries and ministers of the Christian faith will seldom do anything which will compromise the position of their co-religionists and compatriots in India. Their object is to bring the heathens into the fold of Christ, and they set their own co-religionists as paragons of all virtues before the black heathens of India. In fact, of late, it is the highly professing Christians who have been trying to whitewash the character of

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* In the advertisement to the second edition of "History of the Sikhs," Mr. Peter Cunningham (one of the brothers of the author) wrote :—

"The author fell a victim to the truth related in this book. He wrote History in advance of his time, and suffered for it ; but posterity will, I feel assured, do justice to his memory.

* * * * *

".....What Gibbon calls 'truth, naked, unblushing truth, the first virtue of more serious history,' should alone direct the pen of the historian ; and truth alone influenced the mind and guided the pen of the Author of this book."

For writing his history of the Sikhs, Captain Cunningham was removed from political employment by the East India Company.

such of their heroes as Clive, Warren Hastings and Dalhousie and justifying the misdeeds of other Christian statesmen. These highly professing Christians have hardly any sympathy with the natives of India—nay less than those who do not profess Christianity.

Non-official Englishmen, that is, those who are not in Government employ, but earn their livelihood as traders and merchants, as a class, never had any sympathy towards Indians. In his well-known Letters from a Competition-wallah, written in 1864, Sir G. O. Trevelyan said :—

"Heaven knows I would give a month's pay, or a year's pension to have my will of some ruffians for what I have heard them say with applause, and seen them do with impunity. Fearful symptoms these of what must be seething below. However kind he might be to his native servants, however just to his native tenants, there is not a single non-official person in India who would not consider the sentiment that we hold India for the benefit of the inhabitants of India a loathsome un-English piece of cant."

What Trevelyan wrote in 1864, holds true even now. In Trevelyan's time, the official classes at least, manifested some sympathy with the natives of India, but now the British officials have made an alliance with non-officials in looking upon India as a land for exploitation, for the benefit

of their own co-religionists and compatriots. In his work on New India, Sir Henry Cotton observes :—

"The time when the non-official Europeans formed one party in India and the natives another, while the Government officials were charged with the function of protecting native interests, has passed away, and instead thereof we now see a state of things in which the native community exists alone on the one side, while both classes of Englishmen, official as well as non-official, are united on the other." (Page 49 of first edition).

In these circumstances, it is idle to expect a true history of India, from the British—either officials, non-offioials, or missionaries.

The position of educated Indians who are able to throw light on the history of the British period is a very critical and delicate one. Any attempt on their part to unravel the tangled web of Indian History during the Christian supremacy, is construed as creating discontent and disaffection towards the Brititish Government. The *Pioneer,* a well-known British daily of India, published a leading article in its issue of 9th August 1896, under the heading "*The Bengalee Press, how to deal with it.*" Thus wrote the above-named journal :—

"We know how Englishmen within the memory of living men treated their own newspaper writers.....If a gentle and graceful writer forgot himself so far as to call the

Prince Regent "an Adonis of forty" he got two years "hard." If a clergyman praised the French revolution and advocated Parliamentary reform and fair representation, he was condemned to work in iron manacles, to wade in sludge among the vilest criminals."

In other words, historical truths should be suppressed because they are not pleasant reading and hearing to the self-sufficient and assertive inhabitants of England.

Mr. Justice Strachey who tried in 1897 Mr. Tilak. for sedition, in charging the jury, prejudiced them against all historical discussions unfavorable to the British government of India.

The Sedition Act, which was an outcome of Tilak's trial, virtually made truth-speaking, on the part of an Indian, a criminal offence. Under these circumstances, there need not be any wonder that a true history of British India is a desideratum in the literature of the Oriental subjects.

But because there are so many difficulties and drawbacks for the proper execution of the task, it will be sheer cowardice not to attempt it. From want of proper materials, of course, the work will be an imperfect and incomplete one. But just as it is "better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all," so it is better to have

attempted and failed in the task, than never to have attempted it at all. *

II

Fallacies and Problems

Students of the Christian period of Indian History have to face many fallacies, many misrepresentations and distortions of truths and facts, wilfully indulged in by English writers to suit their conveniences and purposes. Foremost amongst these fallacies stands the one which represents that India was given to anarchy until the British assumed its government. A late Commander-in-Chief of the British Isles, named Lord Wolsley, characterised that anarchy in the following terms :—

"My views are that India never existed as India at all until we went there. It was a conglomeration of fighting

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* "Or what higher and unselfish satisfaction could an author derive from spending half a life time in producing a work which in the end may fall dead-born from the press, if it were not the conviction that in the cause in which he has failed another after him may succeed, and that his failure may be a portion of the silent and hidden efforts that co-operate towards a useful end."

[Merz's History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Vol.I,p. 5.]

States, where Mahomedans were cutting the throats of Hindus; and everything that is worth having in India has been derived from English rule.....All the happiness and greatness of India depends upon England.....India would never have existed but for England. India was never a united country until she came under our rule. If left to herself India would degenerate into a bear garden."

And so on and so forth. His lordship was a native of Ireland, a country which was conquered by England. It is only necessary to say that it is a fallacy that anarchy and misgovernment was the normal state of affairs in India until the British assumed the reins of its government. Anarchy in India was due to the Christians of various nationalities who came to India during the decadence of the Moghul rule. Had India been left to herself, she would have discovered some remedies for her ills, and in the struggle for existence, the fittest would have survived. But India was not left to evolve a system of her own government.

Another fallacy indulged in by the British is that India has been conquered by the sword, that the natives of England have become masters of India by conquest in the same manner as the Normans conquered England, or as Englishmen conquered the natives of Scotland, Ireland and Wales. These two fallacies which stare every

student of the British History of India in the face should be thoroughly exposed. No historian would be properly discharging his duties if he were to turn aside from thoroughly investigating how much truth these assertions made by the Britishers contain.

"In history", wrote Professor Seely, "everything depends on turning narrative into problems."*

It will be useful then to turn the narrative of the rise of the Christian supremacy in India into problems.

One of the most important problems to be dealt with is whether it was providential

* "Theory and generalisation are the life-blood of history. They make it intelligible. They give it unity. They convey to us the instruction which it always contains, together with so much for practical guidance in the management of communities as history is capable of rendering. But they need to be applied with reserve, and not only with an impartial mind, but after a painstaking examination of all the facts, whether or no they seem to make for the particular theory stated, and of all the theories which any competent predecessor has propounded. For the historian, while he must keep himself from falling under the dominion of any one doctrine by which it is sought to connect or explain phenomena,, must welcome all the light which any

that the British happened to acquire political supremacy in India. From the means resorted to in acquiring that political supremacy and from the cold and unsympathetic behaviour of the British towards Indians, many have expressed the opinion that it was anything but providential that the British rose to power in India.

The treatment received from the English by the peoples whom they conquered was no better than what they themselves had experienced at the hands of their Norman conquerors.

In his "Rights of Man," Thomas Paine writes :—

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such doctrine can throw upon facts. Even if such a doctrine be imperfect, even if it be tainted by error, it may serve to indicate relations between facts, or to indicate the true importance of facts, which previous writers had failed to observe or had passed too lightly over. It is thus that History is always growing. It is for this reason that History always needs to be rewritten. History is a progressive science, not merely because new facts are constantly being discovered, not merely because the changes in the world give to old facts a new significance, but also because every truly penetrating and original mind sees in the old facts something which had not been seen before."

Bryce's Introduction to the History of the World, Vol. I, p. xlii.

"Governments arise either *out* of the people or *over* the people. The English Government is one of those which arose out of a conquest, and not out of society, and consequently it arose over the people."....."Conquest and tyranny transplanted themselves with William the Conqueror from Normandy into England, and the country is yet disfigured with the marks."....."It is the nature of conquest to turn every thing upside down.....In the addresses of the English Parliaments to their kings we see neither the intrepid spirit of the old Parliaments of France, nor the serene dignity of the present National Assembly ; neither do we see in them anything of the style of English manners which border somewhat on bluntness. Since then they are neither of foreign extraction, nor naturally of English production, their origin must be sought for elsewhere, and that origin is the Norman Conquest. They are evidently of the vassalage class of manners, and emphatically mark the prostrate distance that exists in no other condition of men than between the conqueror and the conquered. That this vassalage idea and style of speaking was not god rid of even at the Revolution of 1688, is evident from the declaration of Parliament to William and Mary in these words: "We do most humbly and faithfully *submit* ourselves, our heirs and posterities, for ever." Submission is wholly a vassalage term, repugnant to the dignity of freedom, and an echo of the language used at the Conquest."

Mr. Paine calls William the Conqueror "the son of a prostitute and the plunderer of the English nation." Again, Mr. Paine writes :

"It is somewhat curious to observe, that although the

people of England have been in the habit of talking about kings, it is always a foreign house of kings, hating foreigners, yet governed by them."

The natives of England bitterly felt their subjugation to the Normans. Readers of Scott's *Ivanhoe* and Thierry's History of the Norman Conquest need not be told how the English were ill-treated by their Norman Conquerors. Referring to the Norman Conquest the late historian, Mr. Freeman, wrote :—

"The circumstances of the conquest would no doubt bring about some changes. It would probably tend to increase the numbers of 'the class of slaves. Such of the natives as were neither slain nor driven out would of course pass into that class."

In another place, Mr. Freeman said,

"Under John and Henry the Third, England felt to the full the bitterness.....of the conquest. The land was overrun by utter strangers ; the men of the old-English birth and the descendants of the first Norman settlers both saw the natives of other lands placed over the heads of both alike. Places of trust and honour and wealth were handed over to foreign favorites, and every man in the land was exposed to a yet heavier scourge, to the violence and insolence of foreign mercenaries."

It should not be forgotten that no conquest was ever effected by observing the codes of morality prescribed by the recognised religions of the world.

The conquest of Scotland or of Ireland by England is euphemistically called the "Union." But how was the "union" in each case brought about? The union of Scotland with England was brought about by "corruption." In his "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," Mr. Lecky writes :—

"The sacrifice of a nationality is a measure which naturally produces such intense and enduring discontent that it never should be exacted unless it can be accompanied by some political or material advantages to the lesser country that are so great and at the same time so evident as to prove a corrective.....The Scotch Parliament was very arbitrary and corrupt, and by no means a faithful representative of the people. The majority of the nation were certainly opposed to the Union, and, directly or indirectly, it is probable that much corruption was employed to effect it."*

In the *Review of Reviews* for September, 1898, Mr. W. T. Stead graphically described the union of Ireland with England by means of "Free Rape."

The English after the union treated the Scotch no better than the Normans had treated the English. In his work on "Union of England and Scotland," Mr. McKinnon wrote :—

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* See the article entitled "*The English connection with Scotland*" in *The Modern Review* for May, 1907, pp. 470 *et seq.*

"To the unsympathetic Englishman, Scotland, even as late as the middle of the last century, seemed a land of barbarians.....'The English ministers', says Ramsay, 'did not know much more of Scotland than they did of Tartary.'.....No government was ever less fitted, by knowledge or sympathy, to govern a people in accord with its wants."*

The natives of Ireland feel the yoke which their conquerors imposed on their necks. Some of the Irish poets have expressed their feelings in very pathetic verses. Their poet, Thomas Moore, thus refers to the enslaved condition of his countrymen :—

"The future ages wondering ask,
"How hands so vile could conquer hearts so brave.
"'Twas fate, they will say, a wayward fate
"Your web of discord wove ;
"While your tyrants joined in hate,
"You never joined in love."

The status of the natives of Wales, as far as authentic history is able to shed any light on the subject, was that of slaves. In his work named "Early Britain", Mr. Alfred J. Church thus explains the origin of the term "Welsh" or "Welch." "Welsh", writes he, "means 'foreigner' ; the invaders, by a strange yet com-

* See also *The Modern Review* for May, 1907 (Vol. I.)

mon figure of speech, calling the native people 'foreigners'" (that is, to say, 'slaves.'). Mr. Freeman writes

"that one of the common old-English names for a female slave is *wylne* or *Welsh woman*."

Thus it is evident that the meaning of the word '*Welsh*' *is* '*Slave.*'

It is the natives of the countries conquered by England who have greatly helped in building up and extending the empire of the English. Mr. Mckinnon, in his work to which allusion has already been made above, writes :—

"The Scottish soldier, merchant, statesman, colonist and explorer have done, relatively speaking, at least as much as their English compatriots in increasing the extent and developing the trade of the British dominions."

The same holds partly true in the case of the Irish and the Welsh.

If Clive and Warren Hastings (who were natives of England) showed the way to acquire political power in India, it was the Irish and the Scotch who were the authors of those policies and measures by which India passed within the grasp of the English. The Marquess Wellesley was a native of Ireland, and his right-hand man, Sir John Malcolm, was a native of Scotland. The Marquis of Dalhousie

was also a native of Scotland. Dalhousie completed what Wellesley had commenced, that is, the establishment of the supremacy of England in India.

No one need wonder that the natives of Scotland and Ireland shaped the policy of governing, of acquiring power in, or rather of the so-called conquest of India. It has been truly remarked by a renowned American writer :

"That the deliverers, the liberators, the advancers of humanity, have always been those who were moved by the sight of injustice and misery rather than those spurred by their own suffering. As it was a Moses, learned in all the lore of the Egyptians, and free to the court of Pharaoh, and not a tasked slave, forced to make bricks without straw, who led the children of Israel from the House of Bondage : as it was the Gracchi, of patrician blood and fortune, who struggled to the death against the land-grabbing system which finally destroyed Rome, so has it always been that the oppressed, the degraded, the down-trodden have been freed and elevated rather by the efforts and the sacrifices of those to whom fortune had been more kind than by their own strength."

It is providential that India has come to be ruled by the English rather than by the French. The English historian Mr. Freeman has observed that

"to win freedom as an heritage for ever, there are times

when we have more need of the vices of kings than of their virtues."

Or to quote the words of Lord Maccaulay :—

"Her (England's) interest was so directly opposed to the interest of her rulers that she had no hope but in their errors and misfortunes. The talents and even the virtues of her six first French kings were a curse to her. The follies and vices of the seventh were her salvation..... England, which, since the battle of Hastings, had been ruled generally by wise statesmen, always by brave soldiers, fell under the dominion of a trifler and a coward. From that moment her prospects brightened."

The former rulers of India lived in India and sympathised with the natives of India. But the same cannot be said of the British rulers of India.

"Sovereigns are identified", to quote the wards of Sir Charles Napier, the Hero of Sindh, "with the countries they ule, but a mercantile oligarchy like the Court of Directors, is not interested beyond the annual balance sheet during their respective tenures of power ;.....Like the pedlar Jew the Director seeks small profit and quick returns, understanding well his personal interest but regardless of Indian greatness or happiness.....For a hundred years they have milked the cow and given her no sustenance."

That this Christian rule has been bringing about—not directly, but indirectly, Indian Unity, will be evident to those who have their eyes open

and can read the signs of the times. In his work on New India, Sir Henry Cotton writes :—

"The Anglo-Indian agitation.....the whole attitude, in brief, of Europeans in regard to the so-colled Ilbert Bill, have tended far more to advance the true cause of Indian unity than any mere legislation on the lines of the original Bill would have been likely to accomplish.....But the unreasonable clamour and rancour of its opponents, and the unexpected success which attended their efforts, gave rise to a counter agitation of first-rate importance and of the most far-reaching character.....The very object was attained which the Anglo-Indian community, if it had been wise in its generation, would have spared no labour to prevent. The people of India have not been slow to follow the example set to them by Englishmen ; they have learnt their strength, the power of combination, the force of numbers."

The attitude of the British towards Indians has evoked the spirit of patriotism and nationality in the breasts of the latter. It is providential, therefore, that India has been entrusted to the rule of England, which has been the great agent in the regeneration of India and Indians. Lord Acton, in his lecture on *The Study of History*, has truly observed that

"The wisdom of divine rule appears not in the perfection but in the improvement of the world."

III

"The Christian Power."

The Roman Catholic Christians, represented by the natives of Portugal, who discovered the sea-route to India, had the authority of the Pope to wage war against non-Christians and conquer their territories. The Protestant Christian natives of England were empowered by their dissolute "mutton-eating King," Charles II, to make peace and war with non-Christian princes and peoples (see the Introduction, pp. 21–23).

The Nestorian Christians had found an asylum in India long before the discovery of the sea-route to India by any Christian people of Europe. Had the Nestorian Christians acquired political supremacy in this country, when the sea-route was discovered, there would have been, in all probability, no occasion for any Roman Catholic or Protestant Christian nation to conquer India.

Those who are Christians are proud to proclaim that India has come under "Christian" government. Thus he who reads the Barrows Lectures of 1896–97 delivered in India by Dr. Henry Barrows under the title of "Christianity,

the World Religion" will be convinced of the truth of the assertion made above. In the course of his first lecture, "*The World-wide aspects of Christianity*" that Reverend gentleman said : —

"The nominal disciples of Christ in the world to-day are more than four hundred millions, while, under *Christian Governments*,* dwelling beneath a reign of law and the influence of the Gospel, are more than six hundred millions of the world's inhabitants. Christianity seems to hold the field to-day. It has been truly said that 'the non-Christian nations could not exclude Christianity if they would, and the most enlightened of them would not if they could.' "

He concluded the first lecture by saying that

"the waters of Christian civilization have been long accumulating on the high lands of Europe and America, and a mighty rushing river has suddenly descended on the thirsty African plains and over the tropic fields of India..... ; and the roar of the on-coming torrent appears to some of us a new fulfilment of Ezekiel's vision of a sacred stream, which shall go out into the east country and down into the desert, healing the waters of the bitter sea."

In his second lecture on "*The World-wide effects of Christianity*," Dr. Barrows said

"that it is not without significance that the nations that

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* The italics are ours.

have accepted the Christian faith hold in their hands the civilization and the practical sovereignty of the globe."

In 1859, Baptist Wriothesley Noel, M. A., published from London "England and India: an Essay on the duty of Englishmen towards the Hindus." In it he wrote :—

"That which is the duty of all Christians must be the duty of the members of the East Indian Government, if they are Christians. If any men do not profess to be Christians, they ought not to be sent by professed Christians to govern a heathen people ;.....and if the governors of India are professed Christians, they should confess Christ." (Page 9).

He quotes with approval what Captain Eastwick, one of the Directors of the East India Company, said in 1858 in a speech at the East India House :

"It is my solemn belief that God has given us that great country to promote the spread of His Gospel." (*Ibid*, p. 15).

In replying to the deputation of the Indian Christian community, Sir William Marris, the Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, said :

"As you know, the Government in this country stands pledged to do justice to all religious interests impartially and to favour none. None the less there must be a natural bond of sympathy between the *Christian Power*, from

which the Government in India had actually derived its origin, and those people of this ancient land, who have embraced and now share, in the Christian religion and its observances." (*The Englishman*, April 5, 1923, p. 10. The italics are ours.)

From a consideration of the above-stated facts, the designation of this work as *Rise of the Christian Power in India* will be found appropriate.

I am under great obligation to Babu Ramananda Chatterjee, M. A., the distinguished Editor of *The Modern Review*, for the trouble he has taken in going through the Mss., and correcting the proofs while this work was passing through the press.

As an introduction to the study of this work, the reader is recommended to peruse "Empire in Asia—How we came by it—a Book of Confessions" by Henry Torrens, M. P.—a cheap reprint of which has been lately published by the Panini Office of Allahabad.

Introduction

Struggles of different Christian nations for supremacy in India

I.

It is said that once Maharaja Ranjit Singh was shown the map of India by one of his Christian officers. Ranjit Singh was an illiterate sovereign.* He did not understand why the map was colored red, green, blue, yellow, etc. He requested the Christian officer to explain to him the meaning of the different colorings in the map. The officer was good enough to do so. He explained that the red color represented the territories of India which had passed into the hands of the Christian merchants of England constituting the East India Company. Ranjit immediately exclaimed: "*Sab Lal Hojaega*" (*i. e.*, the whole map of India would become red-coloured). There was a ring ot prophecy in his

* It is curious that many of the great men of the East have been illiterate. The prophet Mohamed, and Akbar, Sivaji, Jung Bahadur and several other makers of Indian history were totally illiterate.

exclamation. His death had hardly numbered 20 summers when his words came to be verified to the very letter; for the Christian merchants became masters of almost the whole continent of India and thus the map of the country has been coloured red.

It is the object of this history to narrate how this was brought about. The establishment of British supremacy in India is something like a romance in history; for no Christian nation ever came out to India to conquer the country.

II.

The Discovery of the Sea-route to India by Europeans

India has always, since time immemorial, played a prominent part in the civilization of all the nations of the Earth.* It was to discover the sea-route to India, that Columbus begged the leading sovereigns of Christian Europe to equip him with a fleet, and it is also a matter of history, well-known to every

* It had a great fascination for the people of the middle ages, and formed a lure to lead them to the noblest discoveries and the most splendid expeditions. India and its gold were at the bottom of their most extensive plans of discovery and adventure and no efforts were thought too great, no expenditure too lavish, if it could only be reached.

school-boy, how the European nations vied with one another in discovering the sea-route to India. Vasco De Gama, a native of Portugal, succeeded in discovering the route to India. The European nations had no intention to conquer the country; their object was to establish commercial relations with India. It was commercial instinct and no other motive which led them to discover the sea-route to India. India—Golden India, the theme of poets, the wonderland of travellers, haunted them in their dreams. In their imagination India was the richest conntry in the world, a country which supplied the markets of Europe with so many wonderful articles of commerce. In the eleventh century, the Christians of Europe, known as Crusaders, resorted to the East, under the superstitious idea that by so doing they would be absolved of all sins and gain eternal felicity. But the Christians of the fifteenth century, in marked contrast with their co-religionists of the eleventh, set sail to the East to amass earthly riches. They were not prompted by any higher motive or religious zeal when they were fitting out expeditions to discover the sea-route to India. They were anxious to discover the sea-route because this would save much trouble and inconvenience, shifting of luggage and also some expenses. Nor was

this all. Land journey in the middle ages was not without risk to life and property—there was the peril of robbery in conveying merchandise, and the certainty of extortion, for a toll was to be paid in passing a bridge, along the high way, and at the market.* Moreover, in the middle ages it was the sea-port towns of Italy, like Venice and Genoa, which took the lead in trading with the Eastern countries. The Western and Northern countries of Europe had no facilities to carry on any commercial intercourse with the East. It was,

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* The sea was not also without its perils. Hallam writes :—

"In that state of barbarous anarchy which so long resisted the coercive authority of civil magistrates, the sea held out even more temptation and more impunity than the land; and when the laws had regained their sovereignty, and neither robbery nor private warfare was any longer tolerated, there remained that great common of mankind, unclaimed by any king, and the liberty of the sea was another name for the security of plunderers." (Hallam's *Europe During the Middle Ages.*)

However, sea-voyage was not so expensive as journey by land. In his work on the influence of sea-power upon the French Revolution and Empire, Captain Mahan writes :—"Intercourse by water is always easier and, for a great bulk, quicker than by land, but in those days of wagon carriage and often poor roads it was especially so."

therefore, only natural for these countries to seek the sea-route to India so that they might get Indian articles at a cheaper price than they were then obliged to pay. Europe was not then so rich as now. The European Christians had not then brought any non-Christian nations under subjection, or annihilated them. They became rich after they had set out to discover the sea-route to India. They were stimulated by the desire of the precious luxuries of the East, especially of India ; and these wants were the means by which these Christian nations attained by degrees the position which they now occupy in the world.

Columbus set sail to discover India. But he presented to the Christians a new continent to colonize. He died under the impression that he had discovered India. The real credit, however, of discovering the sea-route to India belongs to Portugal.

III.

The Portuguese in India

The sea-route to India was discovered by Vasco De Gama, who braved the stormy passage round the Cape of Good Hope, and landed at Calicut on the 22nd May, 1498. He had only a handful of

companions, who were as brave, daring and unscrupulous as himself. Calicut was governed by a Hindu Rajah known as the Zamorin. Vasco De Gama and his Christian companions were very hospitably treated by the Chief. Hospitality forms a marked feature in the national character of all Indians. Little did the Zamorin know that he was entertaining a people who would uproot his dynasty and supplant his authority, and the land which he ruled would pass into the hands of those foreign Christian adventurers who were then sitting at his feet, praying him to grant them permission to trade in India.

In 1500, the Portuguese established a factory at Calicut under Pedro Alvarez Cabral. Three years later, they also built a fortress in that place, which was commanded by the well-known Alphonso de Albuquerque. This Portuguese adventurer, afterwards Governor, captured Goa in 1506, and in 1510 plundered the town of Calicut and burnt the palace of its kings, thus showing gratitude to the Zamorin who patronised the Portuguese in their endeavour to trade with India.*

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* In a letter from Lieut.-Col. Alexander Walker to Mr. B. S. Jones, dated Bowland, January 31, 1818, it is stated: "It may be observed, indeed, that the behaviour of the

When the Portuguese landed in India, the Indians were ignorant of the use of fire-arms. Possessed of this advantage, the Portuguese had no difficulty in scoring easy victories over the Indians, whenever the latter tried to oppose them. Within less than a century after they had set foot in India, they had explored the Indian Ocean, as far as Japan, and their flag waved triumphantly over many

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Indian States towards mercantile adventurers from all the European nations was uniformly friendly and encouraging. The rich and varied products of their territories rendered the favourable reception of strangers a peculiar part of their policy: most of the chiefs and princes too had either commercial transactions of their own, or levied high customs on those of their subjects. These formed in some instances no inconsiderable sources of their revenue. The arrival of European navigators, therefore, was not only welcomed, but sometimes the event was celebrated with pomp and magnificence. Gama, in writing an account to Europe of his first reception at Calicut, says, 'They little think in Portugal what honours are done us here.' Cabral, in the same manner, was received not only favourably, but with the warmest expressions of joy. In both cases, it is true, this harmony was soon interrupted; but this was owing, according to their own statement, entirely to the misrepresentations of the Arab merchants, who were jealous of being supplanted by them. Are we sure that the Arabs misrepresented them, and that these accusations had no foundation? Certainly some of the measures which they

Eastern lands. They were masters of Mangalore, Cochin, Ceylon, Ormuz, Diu, Goa, and Negapatam. They came out with the intention of trading in the East and they were content when they succeeded in that object. For over a century they monopolised the profitable traffic of the Indian Seas, and the Portuguese adventurers astonished Europe

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took, admitting them, as they say, to have been adopted in their own redress, were of a very violent nature, and such as might reasonably have excited the suspicion and enmity of the Native governments. From the beginning of their appearance in India, the proceedings of the Portuguese were of a description to cause the most unfavourable impressions of European nations. Subsequently, the attack upon Ormuz by their celebrated commander Albuquerque, without the slightest alleged ground of quarrel, his capture of a ship of Calicut, immediately after the conclusion of peace with the Zamorin, and the regular system of piracy which he carried on, seizing every vessel he met, exhibit a systematic violation of all the rights of nations, to which it would be difficult to find a parallel. By these and other means, not much more justifiable, the Portuguese succeeded in establishing an extensive dominion. It would, however, have been wonderful if that nation had not become, under such circumstances, the object of general dread and aversion among the powers of India." (Appendix 20, pp. 299-300, *Report from Select Cammittee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, Vol. VI, printed in 1832.)

with the colossal and gigantic fortunes they had rapidly amassed.*

But the inhabitants of those places in India which came under the rule of the Portuguese were groaning under the yoke of that nation. Writes an English author :

"There is in fact nothing whatever either in their own histories or in the accounts of the travellers to show that the Portuguese ever took any trouble to protect or raise the condition of their native subjects as Shivaji did in the Seventeenth Century. With this fact may be mentioned

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* Bruce writes that "the leading object of their (Portuguese) policy was to obstruct the transit of Indian produce to Europe by the Gulfs of Arabia and Persia, and to monopolise the whole of the Indian trade, by diverting it from these ancient channels, into their circuitous navigation, which would so increase the quantities and diminish the price, as to annihilate the former line of the trade, and thus render commerce subservient to that political influence, which the European art of war had given them, over many of the states bordering on the peninsula of Hindusthan, and over the islands in the farther Indian Seas." (*Annals of the Honourable East India Company*, Vol. I, p. 41.)

In the letter from Lieut-Colonel Walker to Mr. B. S. Jones, already referred to before, it is stated that,

"The Dutch give accounts, no less flattering, of the favourable reception which they experienced from the Native Sovereigns. This was indeed enhanced by the general

their great establishments of domestic slaves brought in Portuguese ships from the African Settlements and distributed at very low prices all over their Asiatic possessions.....To this institution of domestic slavery may no doubt be ascribed the strain of Negro blood frequently perceptible in the Gomese."—Nairne's *History of the Konkan*, p. 54.

To the credit of this Christian nation, it should, however, be said that the armies of Indian reigning sovereigns and princes were taught the use of

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disgust which the violence and injustice of the Portuguese had inspired. They found no obstacle, it appears, to the erection of forts, except the unwillingness of the natives to work at them, but if they chose to erect fortifications themselves, full permission was given. It does not appear that this nation, in their conduct to the natives, ever proceeded to such extremities of violence as the Portuguese. For a long time weak, and struggling at home for their independence, they were obliged to exhibit at least a show of moderation, and to consult the favour of the inhabitants. The outrages by which their conduct in India was marked were committed chiefly against the rival European nations. It is worthy of remark, that the Dutch established their power in India by forming alliances with the Native princes, by serving as auxiliaries, and by subsidiary engagements, resembling in their principle and their result those which have since been pursued with much greater success by the English Company." (P. 300, *Report from Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, Vol. VI, printed in 1832.)

fire-arms and drilled and disciplined in the European methods of warfare by them. They did not make short work with the Indians as did their co-religionists of Spain in America. It was, therefore, providential, that the sea-route to India was not discovered by any other Christian nation knowing the use of firearms. Had the Spaniards under Columbus succeeded in discovering India, it is possible that its inhabitants would have been as badly treated as were the Peruvians and the Mexicans.

The Portuguese waned in importance in the East as they grew rich and rolled in wealth. "The Portuguese", says Alfonzo De Souza, Governor of India, in 1545, "entered India with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in the other; finding much gold, they laid aside the crucifix to fill their pockets, and not being able to hold them up with one hand—they were grown so heavy, they dropped the sword, too; being found in this posture by those who came after, they were easily overcome."

The Dutch supplanted the Portuguese in the Eastern seas, taking their colonies and burning their ships. At present, Goa is the only well-known territory in India belonging to Portugal.

IV.

The Dutch in India

The Dutch came to trade with India towards the close of the Sixteenth Century. As long as they owed allegiance to Spain, Lisbon was the market from which they purchased Indian merchandize. But when they threw off the yoke of Spain, and when in 1580 the Spanish and Portuguese dominions were united under the Spanish Crown, Lisbon was closed against them and they were thus deprived of Indian goods. Their ships were confiscated and the owners imprisoned. One of these Dutch prisoners, who had been a captain of a sea-going vessel, heard the story of India and of the Eastern lands and seas generally from the Portuguese sailors. He made his escape from prison and returned to his native land. The Dutch are well-known for their phlegmatic temperament. But the manner in which this captain gave to his countrymen an account of the luxuries and riches gained by the Portuguese by their trade in the East, fired their imagination and they immediately fitted out eight vessels for the East. Of these four were to sail by the Cape of Good Hope and the rest by the North-Eastern passage.

It is necessary here to explain what was

meant by this North-Western, North-Eastern or Northern passage. When the maritime nations of Europe were anxious to trade with India by the direct sea-route, they were ignorant of general geography. Columbus thought he had discovered India by sailing direct West. Vasco de Gama took the Southern route. Other nations, like the English, and the Dutch, thought they would reach India by the Northern passage. Of course, as could be anticipated, these voyages were unsuccessful, but certain islands, straits, etc., of the Northern latitude were thus discovered. The Dutch discovered Nova Zembla.

The four Dutch vessels which went to the East by the route of the Cape of Good Hope reached Java, and the Dutch were enabled to open trade with the East. However, it was not till 1598 that the Dutch firmly established themselves in the East Indies. At Pulicat and Sadras, which are respectively to the North and South of the present Madras, they established their factories and built fortresses. By and bye, they built their factories in other parts of India. The famous French traveller, Bernier, writing from Delhi, under date the 1st July 1663, says, "The Dutch have a malt factory in Agra, in which they generally keep four or five persons", and further on he mentions "the

Dutch establishments at Bengal, Patna, Surat or Ahmedabad."

The Dutch prospered as long as they confined their energies to a steady prosecution of commerce. They carried on an extensive trade in Bengal and established themselves at Chinsura in 1675. The settlement of Chinsura was subordinate to that of Batavia.

But at last, they got tired of commercial pursuits. They aspired to rule India. They wanted to oust the English from the land of Ind. But without fighting any regular battle the English had the satisfaction to nip in the bud the rising hope and ambition of the Dutch.

After the battle of Plassey, Bengal passed into the hands of a Muhammadan traitor named Meer Jaffer. This man had betrayed his master and thus curried favor with Clive and his comrades. He was made Nawab of Bengal. But he was merely a puppet in the hands of Clive and other Christian merchants in Clive's suite. He did not like this interference in the exercise of his despotic powers. He tried to get rid of the English and for this purpose secretly encouraged the Dutch to import troops. A large fleet arrived from Batavia, consisting of seven ships, three of thirty-six guns, three of twenty-six and one of sixteen, with 1100

troops, European and Malay. Clive saw through the intent of the Dutch adventurers. It was clear to him that his puppet Meer Jaffer had instigated the Dutch to bring their fleet up the Hooghly to assist him (Meer Jaffer) to throw off the yoke of the English. At that time, these Christian nations were at peace. However, Clive perceiving the intention of the Dutch, ordered one of his officers, named Colonel Forde, to attack the Dutch army and prevent its reaching Chinsura. Forde met and discomfited the Dutch. The Dutch were thus baffled in their attempt to supplant the English. From this time onward the trade of the Dutch in India commenced to decline. Their settlements in India were a mere burden on their finances and, therefore, they resolved to dispose of them. In 1805, the East India Company exchanged with the Dutch Sumatra for Chinsura and Malacca. In India proper, no relics remain of the old Dutch settlements, and many educated Indians are ignorant that this nation once aspired to establish their supremacy in India.

V.

The English in India

As mentioned before, Lisbon became the great market for Indian goods when the Portuguese

discovered the sea-route to India. The English became jealous of the Portuguese. At that time, Bristol was coming into prominence as a great sea-port of England. Its sailors, as descendants of the old sea-king robbers, were great pirates and adventurers. In 1527, Robert Thorne, a merchant and sometime Mayor of Bristol, addressed a memorandum to King Henry VIII, advising the opening of a route to India by the North-West. Bristol should never be forgotten by the student of the history of England or of that of India. That city has been the means of connecting the East and the West, bringing England and India into close union. It was one of its citizens who was the first to suggest to the English sovereign to trade with India by the direct sea-route. It was again in Bristol that the first Indian leader of thought who visited England died and lies buried : Bristol contains the bones of the great Rajah Ram Mohun Roy. As years roll on and Indians learn hero-worship, Bristol is destined to become a place of pilgrimage to educated Indians.

For over half a century, English sailors tried hard to reach India by the North-West passage. But all these attempts ended in failure. In 1578, Sir Francis Drake captured a Portuguese vessel that was returning to Lisbon from India. He

plundered her. In the plunder, he found charts which revealed the secret of the route to India round the Cape. In 1594, Sir John Lancaster doubled the Cape of Good Hope and reached Java. The Company which had been formed to trade with the East, received its Charter in A. D. 1600 from Queen Elizabeth, under the title of "Governors and Company of Merchants of London, trading with the East Indies."

It is a notable fact that the Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth was to the "Society of Adventurers" which became constituted into the East India Company.

The Directors of this Company on consultation, resolved "*not to employ any gentleman in any place of charge*," and requested "that they might be allowed to sort their business with men of their own quality, lest the suspicion of the employment of *gentlemen* being taken hold upon by the generalitie, do dryve a greate number of Adventurers to withdraw their contributions." (Minutes, 3rd October 1690, quoted in Bruce's *Annals of the Hon'ble East India Company*, Vol. I, p. 128.)

Sufficient emphasis has not been laid on the nature of the constitution of the East India Company ; for the fact should be remembered that it was a Society of Adventurers who fought shy of

having "gentlemen" for its members. This fact would account for the transactions, deeds or misdeeds of the Christian merchants and their representatives or servants in their dealings with the non-Christian races of the East. The Company, to the very last day of its existence, consisted of adventurers hardly any one of whom deserved being called a gentleman. Adventurers, as a rule, do not observe any code of morality or ethics or show traits of good breeding.

The first native of England to set foot on Indian soil was captain Hawkins. In 1608, in his ship the *Hector*, he cast anchor at Surat. He had a letter from James I, then king of England, to the "great Moghul". So he went to Agra. Jehangir, who was then the great Moghul, treated him very hospitably, and it is related that a Christian Armenian woman was given in marriage to Hawkins. But Hawkins had soon to return to Surat, as he found the Portuguese Jesuits at the Emperor's Court were intriguing against him.

In 1612, Captain Thomas Best was sent out with a squadron of four ships armed for war. He attacked the Portuguese squadron at Surat and captured their fleet. The Portuguese beaten, Surat fell into the hands of the English, thus raising their national prestige in the East. On Feb-

ruary 6th, 1613, a treaty was arranged with the Emperor Jehangir, by which it was agreed that an ambassador should reside at the Moghul Court, and permission was granted to the English to establish a factory in Surat. Sir Thomas Roe was the first English ambassador at the Court of the great Moghul, who laid the foundation of the English trade with India.

Besides Surat, the English established other factories on the Western Coast, and in 1628, founded one at Armegaun, seventy miles north of Madras. In 1640* permission was granted to the English for the factory at Calcutta. Before that time, the trade of Bengal was in the hands of the Portuguese, who a few years previously had incurred the displeasure of the great Moghul for carrying on traffic in slaves and setting the Nawab of Bengal and his officers at defiance. Hearing of their high-handed conduct, Shah Jehan, who was then the great Moghul, sent an army against the Portuguese. The Portuguese were defeated, their settlement at Hugly destroyed, their ships burned, and numbers of them sent to Agra as prisoners. On the destruction of the Portuguese,

* Col. Malleson says 1644. But other authorities give the date as 1640.

the English were anxious to get the trade into their own hands. They applied for and obtained permission to trade in Bengal. But they had to pay heavy duties and their ships were obliged to anchor at Piply near Kedgeri and not allowed to come up the Hughli.*

In 1640, a favorite daughter of the great Moghul at Agra was severely burned. The Court physicians and surgeons could not effect a cure. Shah Jehan despatched a messenger to Surat, desiring the services of one of the English medical practitioners. The English settlers selected Mr. Gabriel Boughton. By his skilful treatment the burns of the princess were healed. Shah Jehan asked him to name his own reward. The patriotic Englishman requested that the East India Company might be allowed to trade in Bengal,

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* Dr. C. R. Wilson does not give credit to this story. In a footnote at p. 12 of his *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. I, he writes :—

"The initiation of the trade with Bengal is usually ascribed to a farman supposed to have been granted to the English by Shah Jahan on the 2nd February 1634, allowing them liberty to trade in Bengal, but confining them to Pipli. I have taken no notice of the story for the following reasons...."

Dr. Wilson's reasons do not seem sufficient to dismiss the story as a figment of the imagination or a mere myth.

free of duty, to establish factories in the province and also that the Company's ships be allowed to come up the Hughli. The great Moghul granted the firman. Mr. Boughton carried it himself to Bengal, and arrived at Raj Mahal, where Shah Shuja, second son of Shah Jehan, held his Court as the Viceroy of Bengal. At that time, one of Shah Shuja's ladies was lying seriously ill. Boughton succeeded in curing her. Shah Shuja out of gratitude afforded every assistance to Boughton in carrying out his scheme for establishing the trade in Bengal on an efficient and permanent basis.

The island of Bombay was presented by Portugal to Charles II in 1661 as a dowry of Catherine of Braganza, who was the legal mistress of his harem. In 1688, it was sold to the East India Company.

Thus the East India Company established its factories on the Eastern as well as the Western coasts of India, and as a trading corporation was a great success. Immense fortunes were made by every one, connected with the Company, in any capacity. The ambition to rule India, or to bring India under the sway of England, had not yet entered the heads of the calculating Christian adventurers constituting the East India Company.

Sir Thomas Roe was deputed as an ambassador from the English King to the Moghul Emperor. He reached Surat on the 26th September, 1615. He obtained the grant of important privileges from the Moghul Emperor in favour of the English. Mill, in his history of British India, writes :—

"Sir Thomas was a man of discernment, and temper, and made the most of the circumstances in which he was placed: though he soon discovered that it was bad policy by which he had been sent ... ... Besides his other services, Sir Thomas bestowed advice upon the Company. 'At my first arrival,' says he, 'I understood a fort was very necessary; but experience teaches one we are refused it to our own advantage. If the Emperor would offer me ten, I would not accept of one. ... ... Let this be received as a rule, that if you will profit, seek it at sea, and in quiet trade; for, without controversies, it is an error to affect garrisons and land wars in India."

Sir Thomas told the servants of the Company that in India they should live frugally and like merchants and send their wives to their native land.

At first the Company adopted Roe's views. But it was in the reign of that dissolute and profligate king of England, named Charles II, that the Company were invested with political powers. That sovereign granted the Company a charter, bearing date the 3rd of April, 1661, and vesting in them authority to make peace and war with

any prince or people, not being Christians. Thus it would be observed that the spirit of the crusaders was not extinct in the natives of England. They drew the line of demarcation between Christians and non-Christians. Non-Christians were looked down upon as infidels and as such no regard was to be paid to their rights, properties or persons. It is on this account that the term Christians has been used in this history to designate the natives of England, because their beloved sovereign Charles II meant that his subjects of England should be thus known.

However, the idea of acquiring supreme power in India did not originate with the English. Mill, in a footnote to Chapter I of Book IV of his History of British India, writes :—

"The two important discoveries for conquering India were : 1st, The weakness of the native armies against European discipline ; 2ndly, the facility of imparting discipline to natives in the European service. Both discoveries were made by the French."

It was the French who "first broke the spell which held the Europeans in subjection to the native powers." At Madras in 1746, the French with only 1200 men defeated the whole army of the Nawab of the Carmatic who had invested the place. Referring to this, Orme writes :—

"It was now more than a century, since any European nation had gained a decisive advantage in war against the officers of the great Moghul. The experience of former unsuccessful wars and the scantiness of military abilities which prevailed in all the Colonies, from a long disuse of arms, had persuaded them that the Moors were a brave and formidable enemy; when the French at once broke through the charm of this timorous opinion, by defeating a whole army with a single battalion."

It was Dupleix and his doings which showed the English the way to establish their authority over the princes and people of Hindustan. Dupleix suffered, for trying to carry out his scheme, at the hands of his own countrymen. But the East India Company, with great zeal and vigour, adopted Dupleix's policy. Robert Clive, in the service of the East India Company, gave effect to this policy. Not to be thwarted in his attempt by the French, he declared that "so long as there was one Frenchman in arms in the Deccan there could be no peace." It was all plain sailing for Clive and the East India Company when the French were got rid of.

The commencement of the political supremacy in India of the Christian merchants of England dates from their winning the battle of Plassey in 1757.

VI.

The French in India.

The French were the last Christian nation that came out to trade with India by the direct sea-route. For this purpose, a company named "*Compagnie des Indes*" was formed in 1664. The credit of organising this company belongs to the French Minister Colbert. He succeeded in inducing the French monarch, Louis xiv, to grant many concessions and privileges to this company. An exclusive right of commerce with India for fifty years, an entire exemption from taxation, the Government guaranteeing the company from all loss during the first ten years, were some of the privileges conferred on this company.

In 1668 the French established a factory at Surat. Masulipatam was founded a year later and Pondicherry in 1674. The founder of Pondicherry was Francois Martin. He resided here till his death in 1706. He succeeded in making friends with Indian princes by the conciliatory policy of adopted. He was succeeded by Dr. Lenoir, who endeavoured to carry out the peaceful policy of his predecessor. His successor, M. Dumas, took a world of pains to make Pondicherry agreeable to any of the Indian rulers who visited it, and he

thus formed the friendship of Dost Ali Khan, the famous Nawab of the Carnatic. He initiated the policy towards establishing a Christian empire in India, a policy which his successor Dupleix tried to carry out. He supported Dost Ali and his son-in-law, Chanda Saheb, against the Mahrattas, who were at war with them. To support himself in the expected conflict, M. Dumas greatly strengthened the fortifications of Pondicherry, raised a force of 1,200 Europeans and also a body of 4,000 or 5,000 Indians, who were armed and drilled in the European manner, thus forming the first known Sepoy corps. The Mahrattas were thus baffled in their exertions to wrest the Carnatic from Dost Ali. The Mahrattas were a terror to the Moghul Emperor of Dehli. When, therefore, he heard of the stand which M. Dumas had made against the Marathas, the effeminate representative of the house of Taimoor was much pleased at the intelligence. He conferred the title of Nawab on Dumas and also the command of 2,000 horsemen as a guard. He was officially recognised as an officer of the Moghul empire.

He was succeeded in October, 1741 by Joseph Francois Dupleix in the governorship of Pondicherry. Dupleix was a remarkable man, possessing great talents and unbounded ambition, and was,

like Napoleon, a born leader of men. He was the first native of Europe who aimed at establishing a Christian empire in India. Historians are agreed that he would have succeeded in his attempt to bring India under French sway, but failed because his superior genius provoked the envy and malice of his own countrymen. France did not like the policy by which Dupleix planned to conquer India. France preferred peace to the glory of an empire.

Dupleix, when he assumed the reins of office, proclaimed himself as Nawab, a title which, as mentioned above, had been conferred on his predecessor M. Dumas, by the Mogul Emperor of Delhi. Soon after this, France and England were involved in war. Madras had been over a century in the hands of the English and at this time, this was their principal seat of commercial enterprise in India. To crush the English trade rivalry Dupleix determined to capture Madras. He despatched a French sailor, by name La Bourdonnais, to carry out his design. La Bourdonnais sailed to Madras and captured it with little difficulty.

Dupleix and the French sailor were not on very friendly terms. In fact, they were rivals and jealous of each other. Dupleix, finding that the Nawab of the Carnatic suspected his aggressive

policy, announced that he was anxious to give up Madras to that prince, after dismantling its fortifications. But La Bourdonnais, without consulting Dupleix, ransomed the town to the English, receiving himself a present of £ 40,000, and then withdrew with the fleet from the Indian shores. To the Nawab of the Carnatic Madras was not restored by Dupleix. The promise given in the ear was broken to the heart. So the Nawab attacked Madras. But Dupleix succeeded in dispersing the Nawab's forces by means of his artillery. This happened on 4th November, 1746.

Dupleix now threw off the mask and showed himself in his true colors. The Nawab of the Carnatic, chagrined and defeated by Dupleix, sought the alliance of the English to gain his cause. The English, under Admiral Boscowen, attacked Pondicherry in 1748. Dupleix was once more successful. To make his triumph widely known, Dupleix instantly despatched messengers to Arcot, Hyderabad and even to Delhi to inform the ruling sovereigns of those places, how the English were routed at Pondicherry by the French. He was receiving congratulations from all sides when the news of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle arrived, in consequence of which he was obliged to surrender Madras to the English with its fortifica-

tions greatly strengthened. Thus was rudely shattered the long-cherished hope of Dupleix to expel the English from the Carnatic.

The English East India Company and the French *Compagnie de Indes*, notwithstanding that England and France were at peace, each kept an army in the field to fight the battles of any Indian prince who required their services, not with the intention of helping him, but to strike a deadly blow at its European rival.

Soon an opportunity presented itself, when the French and the English marshalled their forces to espouse the cause of contending Indian princes. Sahoojee, the Hindu Rajah of Tanjore, was expelled from his principality by Chanda Sahib. To recover his throne, he asked the assistance of the English, offering them, at that time, a large sum of money and the cession of the town of Devicotta. Chanda Saheb had been taken prisoner by the Mahrattas and Tanjore was ruled by one Pertab Singh when the English went to the assistance of Sahoojee. The people of Tanjore were quite happy under Pertab Singh and did not like the return of Sahoojee. So the English took Devicotta by storm and pensioned off Sahoojee, and entered into an alliance with Pertab Singh.

Dupleix saw how the English were daily

growing in power. Hence, he ransomed Chanda Saheb from the Mahrattas and tried to put him on the throne of the Carnatic, the Nawab of which, Anwar-ud-deen, as mentioned above, had after being defeated by Dupleix when he attempted to possess himself of Madras, allied himself with the English. This prince had succeeded Dost Ali, who was the patron of Dumas. Chanda Saheb was the son-in-law of Dost Ali. Hence Dupleix was anxious to set him up in the throne of the Carnatic. Chanda Saheb, with the help of the French, fought Anwar-ud-deen, and defeated and killed him, in the battle of Amboor, on the 3rd of August, 1749. This success brought Dupleix a new ally in the person of Mozuffer Jung. This prince had been kept a prisoner by his uncle Nazir Jung, but he made his escape and joined Chanda Saheb, and with the alliance of Dupleix, proclaimed himself Subedar of the Deccan—an office in virtue of which, on a mere reference to Delhi, he could create or remove all his subordinate rulers or Nawabs, such as the Nawab of the Carnatic, etc.

Trichinopoly, a town with a strong fort, was in the possession of Mahomed Ali, a son of Anwar-ud-deen. Dupleix turned his attention to acquire Trichinopoly. He directed Mozuffer Jung and Chanda Saheb to attack Trichinopoly. But

these two princes did not carry out Dupleix's behest. Instead of attacking Trichinopoly, they attacked Tanjore. They did not succeed in capturing Tanjore. They were put to flight by Nazir Jung, the uncle of Mozuffer Jung. The latter submitted to his uncle, who again imprisoned him, proclaimed himself Subedar and deposing Chanda Saheb, made Mahomed Ali, son of Anwar-ud-deen, Nawab of the Carnatic. Dupleix, however, managed by his secret agents to get Nazir Jung assassinated. Thus again Mozuffer Jung was made by him Subedar of the Deccan, and Chanda Saheb, Nawab of the Carnatic.

But Trichinopoly was still in the hands of Mahomed Ali, who was supported by the English. It was besieged by Dupleix and his French troops. But defended by Lawrence, it defied the efforts of the French and their allies. Trichinopoly has been truly said to have been the rock upon which the towering ambition of Dupleix was wrecked. Fate was against him. He did not spare money or men to capture Trichinopoly. To add to his misfortunes, a reinforcement of 700 men from Europe perished at sea. The French and the English Companies, as well as the ministers in Europe, came to the conclusion, that there would be no peace between the English and the French

as long as Dupleix remained in India at the head of the French affairs. The French ministers were acquainted with the game Dupleix was playing in India, for Dupleix had revealed to them the plan by means of which he would succeed in bringing India under the rule of France. They considered Dupleix's policy a villainous one. Hence they recalled him to France in 1754. All his dreams of the Franco-Indian Empire came to nothing. He was disgraced and died in comparative poverty.

After the recall of Dupleix, France determined not to interfere in the internal affairs of Indian princes. M. Godehen, who was sent out to succeed Dupleix, made a peace with Mr. Saunders, the then English Governor of Madras. It was stipulated that the two Companies henceforth "should never interfere in the differences that might arise among the princes of the country." France kept the promise to the very letter. But the English honored it more in the breach. The French Company came to an end in 1769; Pondicherry and Chandernagore only have been left to the French as their possessions in India.

The French have not been a great colonising nation and have not been successful in planting many colonies. This is perhaps greatly due to their being on the whole an honest people, for

colonisation requires the practice of fraud and treachery on the part of its authors. However, the French are very popular among and much liked by the people of Algiers. These Arabs are becoming Frenchified, and it is probable that in the course of a generation, they will give up their own language for that of France. This is not to be wondered at, "for the chief national virtues of the French people," as Lecky tells us, "result from an intense power of sympathy, which is also the foundation of some of their most beautiful intellectual qualities, of their social habits, and of their unrivalled influence in Europe.

No other nation has so habitual and vivid a sympathy with great struggles for freedom beyond its border. No other literature exhibits so expansive and oecumenical a genius or expounds so skilfully, or appreciates so generously, foreign ideas. In hardly any other land would a disinterested war for the support of a suffering nationality, find so large an amount of support."

It may be all a day-dream of Victor Hugo when he wrote that

"in the twentieth century, there will be an extraordinary nation. This nation will be great.....The capital of this nation will be Paris..... The nation does not yet exist, but its capital is already here..... The function of Paris is to spread ideas. Its never-ending duty is to scatter truths over the world, a duty it incessantly discharges. Paris is a sower, sowing the darkness with sparks of light.

It is Paris which, without a pause, stirs up the fire of progress.....Search the whole world through, it is ever upon the deck of Paris that one may best hear the flapping and quivering of the full-spread, invisible sails of human progress."

The above may be all a patriotic rhapsody on the part of Victor Hugo, but it does not require any stretch of imagination to conceive what India would have been like to-day, had France occupied the position which England does now in India. Had the French driven out the English, almost the whole of India would have been Frenchified by this time.

Bishop Heber, who travelled through northern India during the middle half of the last century, recorded the popularity of the French in India, in the following words :—

"I took this opportunity of inquiring in what degree of favor the name of the French stood in this part of India, where for so many years together, it was paramount. I was told that many people were accustomed to speak of them as often oppressive and avaricious, but as of more conciliating and popular manners than the English Sahibs, Many of them, indeed,.....had completely adopted the Indian dress and customs and most of them were free from that exclusive and intolerant spirit which makes the English, wherever they go, a caste by themselves, disliking and disliked by all their neighbours. Of this foolish, surly, national pride, I see but too many instances daily, and I am convinced

it does us much harm in this country. We are not guilty of injustice or wilful oppression; but we shut out the natives from our society, and a bullying, insolent manner is continually assumed in speaking to them." (Heber's *Indian Journal*).

It is, therefore, natural to expect that the French would have succeeded in completely Frenchifying and absorbing the races which inhabit Hindustan.*

Thus we have seen that the natives of England were not the first or the only Christian nation to come out to India. There were the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes and the French in India. But how was it that the English succeeded in establishing their power in India while the others failed to do so? The history of the rise of their power illustrates the principle of the survival of the fittest. Because the English adjusted themselves to their environment and the circumstances of the situation, therefore they survived.

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* The account of the French in India given in this book is mainly based on Colonel Malleson's writings. But Mr. Henry Dodwell in the introduction to his *Dupleix and Clive*, first published in 1920, writes that "Colonel Malleson abounds in gross mistakes and crude generalisations." (P. xv.) This work is the latest contribution to the subject of the struggles of the French and English for establishing their power in this country.

The Portuguese were more or less religious fanatics who wanted to impose their religion on the peoples of the country with whom they came in contact. They were reared on the traditions of the Inquisition and they established that institution at Goa. It was in this way that they alienated the sympathies of the inhabitants of those territories in which they had established themselves.

Although the French showed the way to the conquest of India, they were too honest to pursue the policy chalked out by Dupleix. Moreover, they were intolerant of the caste prejudices of the Hindus and therefore did not succeed in winning their hearty co-operation in their attempt to establish their supremacy in this country.

The Dutch and the Danes do not seem to have achieved success in gaining political power in India.

But the case was quite different with the English. No other European nation possessed such a scheming and designing nature as they did. A certain British officer, subscribing himself as *Carnaticus*, wrote in the *Asiatic Journal*, for May, 1821 :

"We must at once admit that our conquest of India was, through every struggle, more owing to the weakness of the

Asiatic character than to the bare effect of our own brilliant achievements ; and empire after empire rolled in upon us when we were merely contemplating the protection of our trade, or repelling insult. Kingdoms have been vacated for us, as if by magic spell ; and on the same principle we may set down as certain, that whenever one-twentieth part of the population of India becomes as provident and as scheming as ourselves, we shall run back again, in the same ratio of velocity, the same course of our original insignificance."

But it should be remembered that India was never conquered by England. The natives of that country never came out to India in the *role* of conquerors. In the introduction to his *Political History of India* Sir John Malcolm wrote :—

"Force and power could not have approached the shores of India without meeting with resistance ; but to the unpretending merchant every encouragement was offered ; and when the spirit with which the early settlers defended their property from spoliation showed that they were as superior in their military as their commercial character, they became more an object of admiration than of jealousy to the principal powers of India, who in process of time courted their alliance and aid against each other." (P. 2).

The following warning of his to his co-religionists and compatriots should be always borne in mind by them :

"For if, in the pride of power, we ever forget the means by which it has been attained, and, casting away all our harvest of experience, are betrayed by a rash confidence

in what we may deem our intrinsic strength to neglect those collateral means by which the great fabric of our power in India has hitherto been supported, we shall with our own hands precipitate the downfall of our authority." (P. 7).

William Howitt wrote :—

"The Indian natives were too powerful and populous to permit the Europeans to march at once into the heart of their territories, as they had done into South America to massacre the people, or to subject them to instant slavery and death..... They (the English) went out.....not as mere adventurers, but as sober traders, aiming at establishing a permanent and enriching commerce with those countries ; and if Christainity, if the laws of justice and of humanity were to be violated, it must be under a guise of policy, and a form of law."*

On the assumption that India is a conquered country, there are a few Englishmen who do not justify the conquest. In "*Justice for India*"—a letter to Lord Palmerston, by "*A Plain Speaker*," believed to have been Dr. Congreve, the well-known leader of Comte's cult of positivism in England, it is said :

"Our conquests in the East have been without the excuses with which ambition generally contrives to gild its delinquencies : for, sundered as we are by so prodigious a distance from India, we had no old grudges to avenge upon

* *The English in India—System of Territorial Acquisition*, by William Howitt.

her, no mischief, no danger to apprehend from her; she belonged to one sphere, we to another. Our first relations with her were simply commercial; we crossed the seas to trade with her; we were kindly and hospitably received by her; we were permitted to build factories upon her coasts; but, alas for her! we found her weak, unwarlike, and disorganized—and therefore we conquered her. We conquered her just as the Spaniards conquered Mexico and Peru, with the same cupidity and eagerness for aggrandisement, with the same treachery, and almost with the same inhumanity." (P. 49)

In the course of the same letter, the writer contended that

the Indian "Empire is a creature of might, and not of right; that, in short, we are but conquerors in India, as Timour was before us, and not the just and lawful owners of the country. I have contended that our rule in India is, in a peculiar manner, unjust and unnatural, because even Time cannot, as in the case of most other foreign rules, soften it, but it must to the last wear the stern features of conquest. Lastly, I have contended that our treatment of the native Indians has had no particular merit of beneficence to distinguish it from the rule of other conquerors; assuredly we did not conquer India to make its people happy." (Pp. 50-51)

But India is not a conquered country, for England never conquered her. The very idea of the conquest of India was repugnant to the people of England, as expressed more than once in the Parliamentary Acts. As far back as 1793, on the

occasion of the renewal of the East India Company's charter, it was stated in no ambiguous language that

"To pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and policy of this nation," &c.

The English never conquered India by the sword as the Muhammadans had done. It is the object of this history to narrate the manner in which they attained their political power in India. It is, however, necessary here to indicate the secrets of the rise of their supremacy in this country.

That without the co-operation of the natives of this country, no foreign Christian nation could hope to rise to power, was a fact discovered by the French. Dupleix, who was a man of genius, found that patriotism, as that term is understood in the Christian countries of the West, did not exist in India. Indians were divided among themselves, and so it was not difficult to pit one class against another. They were not devoid of intelligence and physical courage, and hence it was easy to train them in the European method of warfare.

The weaknesses of the Indian character, as exhibited in their simplicity, and faithfulness and devotion to their leaders and their trusting nature, made them easy victims to the wily scheming merchants

of England. Colonel Malleson, in the opening chapter of his well-known work on "The Decisive Battles in India", has referred to the causes which have brought about the establishment of British supremacy in India. He writes :

"The story of the rise and progress of the British power in India possesses peculiar fascination for..... it lays bare the defects in the character of the native races which made their subjugation possible, it indicates the trusting and faithful nature, the impressionable character, the passionate appreciation of great qualities, which formed alike the strength and weakness of those races—their strength after they had been conquered, their weakness during the struggle."

The "heathens" of India were hypnotised by the sanctimonious appearances and smooth and specious promises of the Christian Britishers. There is a proverb in Hindustan that the tusks of the elephant are for show only, while the teeth for mastication remain invisible. Unfortunately the "heathen" Indians did not understand in time the true nature and character of the Christian British adventurers, who, from the charter granted to the East India Company, were not "gentlemen." Hypocrisy is the undeclared creed of almost all adventurers. William Howitt writes :

"Mr. Auber, in his 'History of the British Power in India,' has quoted largely from letters of the Board of

Directors of the Company, passages to shew how sincerely the representatives of the East India Company at home have desired to arrest encroachment on the rights of the natives ; to avoid oppressive exaction ; to resist the spirit of military and political aggression. They have from year to year proclaimed their wishes for the comfort of the people ; they have disclaimed all lust of territorial acquisition ; have declared that they were a mercantile, rather than a political body ; and have rebuked the thirst of conquest in their agents, and endeavoured to restrain the avidity of extortion in them. Seen in Mr. Auber's pages, the Directors present themselves as a body of grave and honourable merchants, full of the most admirable spirit of moderation, integrity, and benevolence ; and we may give them the utmost credit for sincerity in their professions and desires. But unfortunately, we all know what human nature is. Unfortunately, the power, the wealth, and the patronage brought home to them by the very violation of their own wishes and maxims were of such an overwhelming and seducing nature, that it was in vain to resist them. Nay, in such colours does the modern philosophy of conquest and diplomacy disguise the worst transactions between one state and another, that it is not for plain men very readily to penetrate to the naked enormity beneath.....the mode by which the East India Company has possessed itself of Hindustan, as the most revolting and unChristian that can possibly be conceived..... ..... if ever there was one system more Machiavelian—more appropriative of the show of justice where the basest injustice was attempted—more cold, cruel, haughty and unrelenting than another, it is the system by which the government of the different states of India has been wrested

from the hands of their respective princes and collected into the grasp of the British power.....Whenever we talk to other nations of British faith and integrity, they may well point to India in derisive scorn..... The system which, for more than a century, was steadily at work to strip the native princes of their dominions, and that too under the most sacred pleas of right and expediency, is a system of torture more exquisite than regal or spiritual tyranny ever before discovered; such as the world has nothing similar to show."*

It was thus that the simple-minded Indians were imposed upon and made to part with their liberty and earthly possessions. They compare, therefore, the rise of the British supremacy in India with the activity of white ants.

"Some native sage has compared the Europeans in India to *dimaks* or white ants, which from dark or scarcely visible beginnings, pursue their determined objects insidiously and silently, destroying green forest trees, and in their excavated trunks building edifices, communicating by numerous galleries with the hardened clay pyramids, far and near, that denote where formerly flourished the far-spreading cedars. Attacking everything, devouring everything, they undermine and sap and desolate. The simile is not a very flattering one, though it is not in some measure without its aptitude either.....After all, however, there can be no question that in our early connection with India, there was much, from the contemplation of which, the moralist will shrink,

* *Locum Cit.*

and the Christian protest against, with abhorrence." (*The Calcutta Review*, Vol. VII (1847), p. 226.)

The rise of the Christian power in India is not a little due to the fact that the Britishers violated the terms of the treaties they had solemnly entered into with the non-Christian powers of India, whenever it was convenient or their interest to do so. It was in this manner that those Indian princes who entered into alliance with them always came to grief. William Howitt writes :—

"A fatal friendship, indeed, has that of the English been to all those princes that were allured by it. It has pulled them every one from their thrones, or has left them there the contemptible puppets of a power that works its arbitrary will through them. But friendship or enmity, the result has been eventually the same to them. If they resisted alliance with the encroaching English, they were soon charged with evil intentions, fallen upon, and conquered ; if they acquiesced in the profered alliance, they soon became ensnared in those webs of diplomacy from which they never escaped without the loss of all honour and hereditary dominion—of every thing, indeed, but the lot of prisoners where they had been kings."*

The same writer has also said :

"What then is this system of torture by which the possessions of the Indian princes have been wrung from them? It is this—the skilful application of the process by which cunning men create debtors, and then force them at

* *Loc. Cit.*

once to submit to their most exorbitant demands. From the moment that the English felt that they had the power in India to 'divide and conquer,' they adopted the plan of doing it rather by plausible manouvres than by a bold avowal of their designs, and a more honest plea of the right of conquest —the ancient doctrine of the strong, which they began to perceive was not quite so much in esteem as formerly."*

In speaking of the conquest of Sind, Sir John Kaye wrote in *The Calcutta Review* :

"The Sindh Ameers, it is said, violated treaties. It would seem as though the British Government claimed to itself the exclusive right of breaking through engagements. If the violation of existing covenants ever involved, *ipso facto*, a loss of territory, the British Government in the east would not now possess a rood of land between Burhampooter and the Indus."

Colonel Malleson summed up the causes of the Indian Mutiny in two words—"bad faith." Yes, it was "bad faith" on the part of the East India Company to have broken all the solemn engagements and treaties they had made with the non-Christian peoples of India which brought about the Indian Mutiny and the extinction of that society of "Adventurers."

The fatal mistake which most of the Indian rulers committed was the entertainment in their

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* *Ibid.*

service of officers of various European nationalities. They were never loyal to the salt they ate and were too glad and ready to betray their masters, to whose rescue they never came in their hours of trial and trouble. True it is that some of the rulers of European countries benefited their subjects by the employment in their services of adventurers of foreign nationalities. Thus, the late Mr. Grattan Greary, a well-known journalist of Bombay, wrote:—

> As every one knows, Peter the Great regenerated Russia with the counsel and assistance of Swiss and Scottish and German adventurers. Frederick the Great employed French financiers to administer the fiscal system of the Prussian monarchy." (*Travels*, Vol. I, p. 250).

But the case was different with the colourless adventurers serving coloured masters, whom they did not scruple to betray when it paid them to do so.

The planting of British Residents in the courts of the Indian rulers was one of the main causes of the rise of the Christian power in this country. The importance of this fact has not been laid so much stress upon by the writers of Indian History as it deserves to be.

One of the objects of sending Residents to the courts of Indian Princes was to foment domestic

dissensions. Thus, in his history of the Marathas, Captain Grant-Duff writes that

"Mr. Mostyn was sent to Poona by the Bombay Government, for the purpose of.....using every endeavour, *by fomenting the domestic dissensions or otherwise* to prevent the Mahrattas from joining Hyder or Nizam Ally."*

The words put in italics tell their own tale and need no comments.

In the *Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings,* that Governor General thus characterized the conduct of a "Resident at the Native Court."—

"Instead of acting in the character of ambassador, he (the Resident) assumes the function of a dictator, interferes in all their private concerns; countenances refractory subjects against them; and makes the most ostentatious exhibition of this exercise of authority. To secure to himself the support of our Government, he urges some interest which, under the colour thrown upon it by him, is strenuously taken up by our Council; and the Government identifies itself with the Resident, not only on the single point, but on the whole tenor of his conduct."†

M. D. Kavanagh, Esqr., LL. D., of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law, published in 1884, a a work entitled "A few cases illustrating British

* *History of the Mahrattas,* p. 340 (Times of India Edition, Bombay, 1873).

† Panini Office reprint, pp. 26-27.

Rule in India". In the preface to this work (p. iii), he wrote :

"The Company, when they formed political alliance with the Native Powers, made Treaties with them, one of the stipulations being that no Englishmen, no Frenchmen, no Americans, nor any other Europeans should, not only not trade, but even not reside within the native territories,..... .....These extraordinary, most selfish, unexampled and anti-international arrangements so forced upon the Princes have not only assisted British residents at the native Courts in worming themselves into the domestic affairs of the Princes, for barring all the access of natives, and for coercing the Princes under trivial pretexts, and in point of fact, degrading them into mere state-prisoners,—but also failed not to create a system of plottings, intrigues, prevarications, mistrust and mendaciousness in which both natives and British residents, with a few brilliant exceptions, still equally participate."

Dr. Kavanagh adduced several instances in support of his statement. Then he wrote (p. iv) :

"It is, moreover, notorious that the British residents demean themselves so far as to pry, for sinister purposes, into the private amusements of the Princes ; thus, for instance, there may be seen exhibited in the Oude Blue Book such wretched trash as the following :—'May 17th. This morning the King received the obeisance of his eunuchs and courtiers, and amused himself with some pigeons. March 30th. Last evening the King passed his time in witnessing the performance of dancing girls. May 11th. Last evening the King amused himself with letting off some fire-works. This morning he made a present of shawls and kerchiefs to

Mosahibali, a fiddler, and an African female. May 23rd. Six persons have been employed to catch cats for the King,' and so on, *ad infinitum*."

Regarding the doings of the Resident at the court of Satara, the *British Friend of India Magazine* for March, 1843, wrote :—

"Now, the fact stands forth palpably, on the record, that Major Ovans did buy evidence ; virtually, though not in these broad terms. *Moreover, had he not done so, then he would have failed in the duty regularly expected by the Company from their residents at native courts.* How did the Company acquire Bengal, but by perjury and forgery ? Or Arcot, or any other principality ?"

The words put in italics in the above extract need no comments.

The "system of subsidiary alliance" was designed to wipe out the independent existence of Indian States. This is evident from the opinions expressed by some of the very competent British officers to the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Committee appointed in 1832. Thus, according to W. Russell, who was, during nearly 21 years, Resident or Assistant Resident at Hyderabad, the subsidiary system led inevitably to the ultimate destruction of the state which embraced it. In his opinion, under this system, the Nizam was dying comatose, while the Peshwa had expired in convulsions.

In a letter addressed by Sir Thomas Munro to Lord Hastings, dated the 12th of August, 1817, it was stated that the

"Inevitable tendency (of the subsidiary system is) to bring every native state into which it is introduced, sooner or later, under the exclusive dominion of the British Government....I have no doubt that the subsidiary system must everywhere run its full course, and destroy every government which it undertakes to protect."

The grant of concessions by Indian rulers to foreign Christian traders has been one of the causes of the rise of the Christian supremacy. An American writer has very truly said :—

"The most refined methods of annexation are through loans and railways. The difference between police protection and an army is a line that has never been pointed out.....China was no less dismembered by the change in concessionaires who were really conquerors.*

The ruin of Indian trades and industries as well as the political downfall of India may be said to have dated from the day when the Moghul Emperor with the generosity and magnanimity characteristic of an Asiatic sovereign granted such terms to the foreign merchants of the British nationality trading in India as no modern Christian power would ever think of giving to any Christian

* *Industrial and Commercial Geography*, by J. Russell Smith. New York. Henry Holt and Company, 1913.

or non-Christian people. Under the guise of traders, the foreigners were conspiring for the conquest of India.

The influence of sea-power on history has been very ably dealt with by the American writer, Captain Mahan. But the fact that India possessed an indigenous navy of her own and the destruction of this navy paved the way to the rise of the Christian power has not been pointed out as yet by any writer on Indian History. In a paper on the Marhatta Navy contributed by me to the well-known Bengali monthly the *Prabasi*, Vol. IV, No. 8, pp. 442-445, I tried to show that the destruction of that navy in 1756 A. D. by the British under Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive greatly contributed to the success of that nation in planting their power in this country.

VIII.

In the preface to the first volume of his *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Dr. Wilson wrote :

"We have yet to understand why it was from Bengal, not from Madras, or Bombay, that the English dominion took its rise." (P. vii).

No writer on Indian History has made any attempt to answer this question satisfactorily.

Sir Alfred Lyall, in his *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, writes :—

"To advance into Bengal was to penetrate India by its soft and unprotected side."

But the above-named author should have remembered that his compatriots did not obtain their footing on the soil of Bengal by conquest. The English established themselves first at Surat, then at Bombay and Madras before they came to Bengal. But they found Bengal more fertile than any other part of India. They came to see the advantages that would accrue to them from trading in Bengal. Hence they asked for concessions for trade there from the Moghul Government. The grant of these concessions firmly established the English in Bengal. The foundation of Calcutta by Job Charnock was not accidental, but was due to the experience of half-a-century's trade in that province. He understood the importance of Calcutta as a trade centre and also its importance from the military and strategical point of view*

The Moghuls had no navy worth the name. The coasts of Bengal were invaded and their inhabitants constantly plundered by Christian

* Wilson's *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. I. pp. 127 *et seq.*

pirates of the Portuguese nation. On account of the Mahratta navy, the English could not make such an advantageous settlement on the Western Coast as they did on the Eastern. This must have been understood by Job Charnock and his other co-religionists and compatriots when they were laying the foundation of Calcutta as the centre of their trade in the East.

The fabulous wealth of India was, as it were, hoarded in Bengal and the English were fortunate in thus finding their way there.

They attached themselves to the natives of that province by their businesslike habits and by trying to administer even-handed justice to those who came under their jurisdiction in the new settlement of Calcutta. In concluding the introductory account of the early history of the English in Bengal, Dr. Wilson writes :—

"The effect of the English settlement on the natives of the country is not very noticeable in the story as far as I have brought it, yet this perhaps is the most important point of all. In Calcutta the English made many of their first experiments in ruling India.....Poor and unworthy as the administration of the early settlement may seem in modern eyes, we can have no doubt that it presented a very favourable contrast to the government of the surrounding districts, a contrast which was not forgotten in 1757."*

* *Loc. Cit*, Vol. 1, p. 117.

The reputation the English earned for themselves at Surat, where they had established their first factory in India, would be evident from the following:—

"As the number of adventurers increased the reputation of the English was not improved. Too many committed deeds of violence and dishonesty.....Hindus and Mussalmans considered the English a set of cow-eaters and fire-drinkers, vile brutes, fiercer than the mastiffs which they brought with them, who would fight like Eblish, cheat their own fathers, and exchange with the same readiness a broadside of shot and thrusts of boarding pikes, or a bale of goods and a bag of rupees."*

The estimate which the people of Western India had formed of the English and of Christianity has been thus described by the writer quoted above :

"But according to Terry, the natives had formed a mean estimate of Christianity. It was not uncommon to hear them at Surat giving utterance to such remarks as :—Christian religion, devil religion, Christian much drunk, Christian much do wrong, much beat, much abuse others. Terry admitted that the natives themselves were very square, and exact to make good all their engagements; but if a dealer was offered much less for his articles than the price which he had named, he would be apt to say :—'What!

* *The English in Western India* by Rev. Philip Anderson. (P. 22).

dost thou think me a Christian, that I would go about to deceive thee ?"*

Dr. C. R. Wilson writes :—

"The English in Bengal were equally notorious for their quarrels, the natural outcome of the prevailing eagerness to make money and the spirit of espionage fostered by their masters, who were pleased that their servants should tell tales of one another. The old Viceroy Shayista Khan, called them 'a company of base, quarrelling people and foul dealers'; and our great modern authority will not gainsay that the noble had good grounds for his assertion. The impression of the moral and social tone of the Company's servants in the Bay which has been left on the mind of Sir Henry Yule by his exhaustive study of the records of the time is 'certainly a dismal one' and he has found it 'hard to augur from their prevalent character at this time the ultimate emergence among the servants of the Company of such men as Elphinstone, Munro, and Malcolm, Henry and John Lawrence, Martyn and Heber."†

The misdeeds of the English in Western India and Bengal were not unknown to their masters at home. But the East India Company tried to impress on their servants in Bengal the importance of behaving properly and trying to appear sanctimonious, and fair and just to the people who had

* *Ibid.* p. 32.

† *Loc. Cit.* Vol. I, p. 66, It is proper here to say that Malcolm, Elphinstone, Munro and John Lawrence were as great adepts in occidental diplomacy, as Clive and Warren Hastings.

come under their jurisdiction. Writes Dr. C. R. Wilson :

"Happily the Directors had better ideas as to how their financial position at Calcutta might be improved. They saw that the revenues would increase with the population and that the population would increase if the Government was just and the town safe and healthy. The Court declared again and again that righteousness is at the root of prosperity. 'Let your ears be open to complaints and let no voice of oppression be heard in your streets. Take care that neither the broker, nor those under him, nor your own servants use their patrons' authority to hurt and injure the people. Go into the different quarters of the town and do and see justice done without charge or delay to all the inhabitants. This is the best method to enlarge our towns and increase our revenues'."*

The mask of sanctimoniousness which the English put on in Bengal early in the eighteenth century deceived the natives of that province as to the real character of the adventurers in their midst. They judged them from their outward appearances. They placed their implicit confidence in them. This confidence and this trust explain the rise of the Christian power in Bengal.

After the British had obtained political power in Bengal, it was not difficult for them to maintain it. Thus, Governor Verelst wrote to the authorities of the East India Company :—

* Loc. cit. Vol. II, Part I, p. lxix.

"The first and great cause of our security is the general indigence of the Mogul empire. The invasion of Nadir Shah gave the first stroke to its power and opulence,.....

"The natural consequence of these circumstances has been, that the different native powers find their finances narrow, and their treasures unequal to the maintenance of a respectable army, or the prosecution of a war of any duration. Whenever, therefore, they are urged by ambition or necessity to enter on any expedition, they assemble new levies for the purpose with the most unreflecting precipitancy; they risk everything on one compaign, because they have seldom resources for a second; and come to an engagement at all events, because the consequences of a defeat are less terrible than those which must ensue from the desertion or sedition of an ill paid and disaffected army.....

"These circumstances, I apprehend, gentlemen, have been very principal sources of our repeated victories over these immense Asiatic armies, which have fled before a handful of your troops; and these will, I trust, either deter others in future, or ensure success against any who may be desperate enough to brave a force like ours, so strengthened by discipline, and rendered formidable by uninterrupted success.

"A second, and no less powerful reason for the security of our situation, is the discordancy of the principles, views and interests of the neighbouring powers; and which must ever defeat any project of acomplishing, by an association, what the wealth and power of a single one must prove unequal to. The majority of the present princes of Hindustan have no natural right to the countries they possess..... conscious that the maintenance of their usurped authority

depends on their preventing any of the members from being too much depressed, or too much elevated, they see become jealous and suspicious of each other, and ever ready to throw in their weight against any one whom they see rising too high above the common level. For this reason, they at first looked on our successes with an evil eye ; still our generosity to Suja-u-daula, our attention to our treaties and public faith, and, above all, our moderation in not pursuing our victories, begot a confidence in us they had not in their countrymen, and made them rather ambitious of our friendship than jealous of our power.

"Thus circumstanced, it will alway be easy for a watchful and active administration on our side to hold the general balance of Hindustan, and crush every combination in the bud, by spiriting up some neighbouring power, who may be either ill-disposed, or at least not favorable to the confederates."

Talboys Wheeler's *Early Records of British India*, pp. 376—378.

Britishers are never tired of writing and saying that they have established "Pax Britannica" in India—that India did not exist as India until they went and established their supremacy there. Regarding the prevalence of anarchy in India, a writer, presumably an Englishman, wrote as follows :—

"Anterior to the era of British rule in the East, this country, it is true, had been immemorially scourged by foreign invasion, or torn by domestic anarchy and violence. But the least meditation on the history and elements of human societies will make it abundantly evident, that a very

broad gulf intervenes between anarchy and annihilation; and that even in the full roar and spring-tide of violent and bloody periods, the communities of the earth are steered onwards, by an unseen hand, through healthful revolutions to regeneration and prosperity.....During the era of Muhammadan domination, towns and villages were sacked and burnt, and vast multitudes perished and were blotted from the face of the earth by sword, fire, and famine. But gradually a spirit of resistance sprang up in men's hearts, and the homes and properties of countless millions were preserved by the valour and wisdom of their own struggles. This is no speculation. It is a true allusion to a real and living principle of protectiveness, rooted out, in a great measure, from the provinces under British sway, but seen in active operation in Native States. In Oude, for instance, anarchy and violence may be called the law of the principality. Nevertheless, men continue to people the face of the soil. The population is undiminished. Annihilation makes no progress even in the footsteps of sanguinary feuds and open rapine. Affairs find a real and powerful adjustment by the principle of resistance and self-defence; and it may be safely averred, that even the ceaseless struggles, which prevail in that turbulent kingdom, denote a political and social frame of more healthful vigour and activity, than the palsied lethargy of despair, which characterizes the festering and perishing masses under the rule of the British. If national annihilation be indeed attainable by mere human wickedness or human errors, we hesitate not to declare our solemn opinion, that British India is lapsing more visibly towards its gulf than any other community of the earth."

(*The Calcutta Review*, Vol. I (1844), pp. 190-191).

CHAPTER I.

Siraj-ud-dowla.

The rise of the British East India Company's supremacy in India is inseparably connected with their treachery towards and conniving at, if not actually instigating, the assassination of Siraj-ud-dowla. That unhappy prince ascended the throne, not of his fathers but of one who was himself an usurper. His maternal grandfather Ali Verdi Khan was a soldier of fortune—a free lance who rose to power by means which are justified in state-craft on the ground that everything is said to be just and fair in love and war. Ali Verdi tried to plant his dynasty in Bengal. But he knew the character of the East India Company's servants well. He knew their intriguing nature, their want of scruples and of sense of gratitude and their reputation for perfidiousness. His reign was not long, and, engaged as he was in checking the Mahratta inroads, and suppressing other domestic troubles, he could not direct his attention to the uprooting of the English from his dominion. But if the warning of the wizard to Lochiel be true that

" 'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.",

then Ali Verdi when about to die must have known the plot and conspiracy which the English in the disguise of traders were hatching against him and his dynasty.* The English were a nation of shop-

* It is also not improbable that Ali Verdi Khan knew something of the designs of the English on the provinces which he governed from what one Colonel Mill of that race wrote to one of the Christian princes of Europe. In 1746, Colonel Mill submitted his scheme for the conquest of the three provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa under the flag of the Emperor of Germany to Francis of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa. He wrote :—

"The Moghul Empire is overflowing with gold and silver. She has always been feeble and defenceless. It is a miracle that no European prince with a maritime power has ever attempted the conquest of Bengal. By a single stroke infinite wealth might be acquired, which would counterbalance the mines of Brazil and Peru.

" The policy of the Moghuls is bad ; their army is worse ; they are without a navy. The Empire is exposed to perpetual revolts. Their ports and rivers are open to foreigners. The country might be conquered, or laid under contribution, as easily as the Spaniards overwhelmed the naked Indians of America.

" A rebel subject, named Ali Verdi Khan, has torn away the three provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa from the Moghul Empire. He has treasure to the value of thirty millions sterling. His yearly revenue must be at least two

keepers and so were the Hindus. Bengal in the middle of the eighteenth century presented the spectacle of Christians intriguing with "heathens" for the overthrow of the Muhammadan power. Mr. S. C. Hill, in his Introduction to "Bengal in 1756-1757", wrote :—

"The fact that the commerce and manufactures of the country were almost entirely in the hands of the Hindus naturally brought them into close connection with the European merchants, who had settled in the country for

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millions. The provinces are open to the sea. Three ships with fifteen hundred or two thousand regulars would suffice for the undertaking. The British nation would co-operate for the sake of the plunder and the promotion of their trade. The East India Company should be left alone. No Company can keep a secret. Moreover, the English Company is so distracted as to be incapable of any firm resolution." (Bolts' *Considerations of the affairs of Bengal*, Appendix).

A shrewd and far-seeing statesman as Ali Verdi was and kept fully informed of all that transpired in his satrapy by the host of informers and spies whom he maintained and liberally paid, it is not unreasonable to believe that he must have known of the designs which the Christians especially of the English race in the disguise of merchants trading in his dominion harboured against his principality. This perhaps accounts for his jealousy of the Christians traders whom it was his policy never to encourage or afford any preferential terms.

the purpose of trade, and so produced a kind of tacit alliance based mainly upon their material interests."*

That the English had been intriguing with the Hindus long before the accesion of Siraj-ud-dowla to the *musnad* of Bengal is evident from what one Colonel Scott wrote to his friend, Mr. Charles F. Noble, as far back as February, 1754. The latter in his letter to the Select Committee, Fort St. George, dated 22 September, 1756, wrote :—

"By what Colonel Scott observed in Bengal the *Gentue Rajahs* and inhabitants were very much disaffected to the Moor Government, and secretly wished for a change and opportunity of throwing off their tyrannical yoke. And was of opinion that if an European force began successfully, that they would be inclined to join them if properly applied to and encouraged, but might be cautious how they acted at first until they had a probability of success in bringing about a Revolution to their advantage."†

Here, of course, the wish is father to the thought. The Hindus of their own accord did not wish for a change. They were happy and prosperous under the rule of the followers of the Crescent. Thus even Mr. S. C. Hill is compelled to write :—

"The accounts of Muhammadan rule by Muhammadan writers do not, I must own, show any signs of such mis-

* Vol. I, p. xxiii.

† *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 328.

government as would impel an oriental race to revolt—in fact, I think every student of social history will confess that the condition of the peasantry in Bengal in the middle of the eighteenth century compared not unfavorably with that of the same class in France or Germany....."*

But the Christian English, to make them serve as their catspaw, intrigued with the "heathen" Hindus and they must have placed some temptations before the latter's eyes to make them discontented and throw off the yoke of the Muhammadans.

Colonel Scott was perhaps one of those who were intriguing with the "heathen" Hindus, for in the letter of Mr. Charles F. Noble to which allusion has already been made before, it is said :—

"The Colonel was at great pains to procure a perfect knowledge of that Court, [Court at Murshidabad], Government, country and people, and I believe few men knew it better than he did at his death.

"As the Colonel was soon known to several of the greatest men of that country by means of Omy Chund (an eminent merchant at Calcutta and the best acquainted with the Company's affairs and interest of any one in that country) he had several conferences with them, particularly with Raja Tilluchand of the Burdwan Country and Cozee Waszitt of Hugelie, who had mentioned his arrival to the Nabnb."†

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* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. xxiii.

† *Ibid*. Vol. III, p. 326.

There can be no doubt that this Christian officer was intriguing with the "heathens". Ali Verdi Khan was naturally anxious to see him ; it may be that in the interests of the State, he wanted to keep him a prisoner or take his life. But the Colonel did not see him.

"Colonel Scott was prepared and ready to go to Moxudabad (where the Nabob expected him) when he received the then Governor and Council's letter of Madras intreating him to come with all speed to their assistance upon the Coromandel Coast. On this he excused himself to the Nabob, in the politest manner,....."*

Ali Verdi Khan was naturally jealous of the English. Thus Monsieur Jean Law, Chief of the French Factory at Cossimbazar, in his Memoir wrote :—

"He saw with equal indignation and surprise the progress of the French and English nations on the Coromandel Coast as well as in the Deccan, for by means of his spies he was informed of everything that happened there.....But he was not free from anxiety. He feared that sooner or later the Enropeans would attempt similar enterprises in his government.....

"This disposition of the Nawab showed itself especially when he came to know by his spies that some fortification or other was being erected in Calcutta or Chandernagore. The least repair or the pulling down of a house near the Fort

* *Ibid*, p. 326.

was enough to alarm him. An order was immediately issued to stop the work;.....It would appear that his plan was to oblige all the European nations indifferenly to have no forts. 'You are merchants,' he often said to our and the English *Vakils*, 'what need have you of a fortress? Being under my proctection you have no enemies to fear'. He would probably have tried to carry out his ideas if he had thought he would live long enough to finish the business, but he was old. Not wishing to risk any thing *he contented himself with instructing his successor-elect in a line of conduct in which we have had opportunities of seeing what lessons he received from Ali Verdi Khan.*"*

In his dying speech to his successor-elect Ali Verdi, a far-seeing statesman that he was, and also as the sun-set of life gave him mystical lore, said :—

"Keep in view the power the European nations have in the country. This fear I would also have freed you from if God had lengthened my days. The work, my son, must now be yours. Their wars and politics in the Telinga country should keep you waking. On pretence of private contests between their kings they have seized and divided the country of the King (i. e. the Moghul Emperor) and the goods of his people between them. Think not to weaken all three together. The power of the English is great; they have lately conquered Angria, and possessed themselves of his country; reduce them first; the others will give you little trouble, when you have reduced them. Suffer them not,

* *Ibid.* Vol. III, pp. 161-162. The italics are ours.

my son, to have fortifications or soldiers: if you do, the country is not yours."*

Ali Verdi Khan died of dropsy on the 10th of April, 1756 and was succeeded by Siraj-ud-dowla, who, from the records available, does not appear to have been at this time more than 24 years old. Whether we regard the above speech of Ali Verdi Khan as 'a specious fable' or not, the fact remains that when the young prince ascended the throne of Bengal, his was not a bed of roses. The thorns which were pricking him were the trading natives of England. They were giving him trouble on every side. The English, it seems, had never any love for him. M. Jean Law, in his Memoir, writes :—

"They (the English) never addressed themselves to Siraj-ud-dowla for their business in the Durbar, but on the contrary avoided all communication with him. On certain occasions they refused him admission into their Factory at Cossimbazar and their country houses,....."†

The English also slighted, if not deliberately insulted, him by not sending him any present

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* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 16. This speech was considered by many as a 'specious fable,' invented by Mr. Holwell to serve his ulterior purpose. Vide *Ibid* II. 129, 162 and III, 352, 355.

† *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 162.

when he ascended the throne of Bengal. Mr. William Tooke, in his Narrative of *The Capture of Calcutta*, wrote :—

"I have already observed by what means, Seir Raja Doulet (Siraj-ud-dowla) came to the Nabobship, upon which occasion it is usual according to an old Eastern custom on being appointed Prince of the country to be visited by the different foreign nations and proper presents made him. This in the first place we neglected doing, and being a man of an infinite deal of pride and ostentation (although abandoned to all manner of vice) gave him no small vexation, not only by our slighting of him as we did but as there was very strong parties against him in the country which made him apprehensive we favoured some one of them."*

Of course, there can be no doubt that the English were intriguing and conspiring against him and that was the reason of their deliberately slighting him. Siraj-ud-dowla would have been less than a human being—not to say forgetttng his position as a sovereign—to have overlooked the manner in which the English insulted him. No wonder that he also harboured designs against them and tried to get rid of them from the dominion over which he ruled.

But there were other causes, besides the personal ones mentioned above, which left him no

* *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 278.

other alternative than that of making an attempt to drive the English out of his realm.

It cannot be denied that Siraj-ud-dowla had just grounds of being dissatisfied with the perfidious conduct of the English. It is an English proverb which says that "Give an Englishman an inch, and he will ask for an ell." The truth of that proverb was being daily exemplified in the behavior of the English towards the Nabob. One David Rannie, in his "Causes of the Loss of Calcutta," dated August, 1756, wrote :—

"The injustice to the Moors consists in that being by their courtesy permitted to live here as merchants, to protect and judge what natives were their servants, and to trade custom free, we under that pretence protected all the Nabob's subjects that claimed our protection, though they were neither our servants nor our merchants, and gave our *dustucks* or passes to numbers of natives to trade custom free, to the great prejudice of the Nabob's revenue, nay more we levied large duties upon goods brought into our districts from the very people that permitted us to trade custom free, and by numbers of their impositions (framed to raise the Company's revenue) some of which were ruinous to ourselves,.....caused eternal clamour and complaints against us at Court."*

The English set at defiance the authority of the Nabob by repairing and strengthening their

* *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 384.

fortifications in Bengal, especially that at Calcutta. The plausible excuse which they made was that as a war was anticipated between the natives o England and those of France, it was for their safety and defence that the former were repairing and strengthening their fortifications. But if there was any truth in the plea. they should have acted on the advice given to them by the Court of Directors of the East India Company.

In the Court's letter, dated 29th December, 1755, they wrote :—

"We must recommend it to you in the strongest manner to be as well on your guard as the nature and circumstances of your presidency will permit to defend our estate in Bengal ; and, in particular, that you will do all in your power *to engage the Nabob to give you his protection* as the only and most effectual measure for the security of the Settlement and property."

But the English did not act on the advice contained in the words which have been put in italics in the above extract. As a matter of courtesy, which their conduct did not entitle them to expect from the Nabob, Siraj-ud-daula wrote both to the French and the English to cease building any more or repairing the existing fortifications. M. Jean Law, Chief of the French Factory at Cossimbazar, wrote :—

"I immediately drew up an *arzi* or request and had one

of a similar character brought from Chandernagore. These two papers were sent to Siraj-ud-dowla, who appeared satisfied with them. He even wrote me in reply that he did not forbid our repairing old fortifications but merely our making new ones. Besides, the spies who had been sent to Chandernagore, having been well received and satisfied with certain presents, made a sufficiently favourable report for us, so that our business was hushed up."

But the English were determined to give trouble to the Moslem prince. Continued M. Jean Law in the Memoir from which the extract has been given above :—

"It was not the same with the English. "The spies of the Nawab were, it is said, very badly treated at Calcutta. Instead of trying to appease the Nawab,..... the English made a very offensive reply to his order. I did not see it but trustworthy persons assure me it was so."

Then in a footnote, M. Jean Law added :—

"The rumour ran that Mr. Drake replied to the spies that, since the Nawab wished to fill up the Ditch, he consented to it, provided it was with the heads of the Moors. I do not believe he said so, but possibly some thoughtless young Englishmen let slip these words, which, being heard by the *harkaras*, or spies, were reported to the Nawab."

The English were insolent to the Nawab, because they had been intriguing with the Nawab Shaukat Jung of Purnea. The latter—a relative of Ali Verdi Khan—aspired to the throne

of Bengal. He had procured by specious presents and promises from the Delhi Emperor, a *Sanad* conferring on him the Subahdari of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. He also very probably relied on the help of the English to gain his object and thus oust Siraj-ud-dowla. Siraj-ud-dowla had to march against him. Writes M. Jean Law :—

"As he (Siraj-ud-daula) feared some movement on the part of Saukat Jang he marched against him. It was a mere pleasure party. The Nawab of Purneah, though brave, now showed as little firmness as the *Begam* (Ghasety). On the first news of Siraj-ud-daula's approach he sent presents accompanied by a letter in which he tried to justify himself against the rumours which had been current, and concluded by submitting himself to the clemency of his master. Siraj-ud-daula granted him his friendship, or at least pretended to do so. It is said that it was now that he first saw clearly that the English were taking an important part in the intrigues of his enemies. I was assured that the Nawab of Purneah showed him some letters which he had received from them."*

There were other circumstances also which left no doubt in the mind of Siraj-ud-daula of the conspiracy that the English had been concocting against him. They were harbouring in their settlement of Calcutta a person named Krishna Das,

* *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 164.

son of Raj Ballabh. Raj Ballabh had fallen in disfavour of Siraj-ud-dowla. To save his property from the sequestration of that prince, he sent his son Krishna Das, together with all the moveable property and the women of the household, to Calcutta. Raj Ballabh, whilst Dewan at Dacca, was very useful to the British. Governor Drake in his Narrative, dated 19th July, 1756, wrote :—

"On or about the 16th of March [1756] a letter arrived from Mr. William Watts, Chief at Cossimbazar, addressed to the President and Mr. Manningham certifiying an application having been made to him from Rajabullub requesting we would admit his, Rajabullub's, family into Calcutta for the space of two months until Kissendas his wife was brought to bed and able to proceed on her journey (this Kissendas was son to Rajabullub) and strenuouly recommended we would not refuse that request as Rajabullub was likely to hold great posts in the government and might from such favour shewn his family be very instrumental in giving an uninterrupted currency to our business at Dacca and its dependencies....."*

Kissendas was accommodated in the house of Amin Chand, a Panjabi merchant, represented by truthful Christian historians as Omy Chand the 'crafty Bengalee.' He is the same man to deceive whom the 'heaven-born General'

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 120.

Robert Clive did not scruple to commit forgery.

The demand of the Nawab for the surrender of Kissendas and his wealth was peremptorily refused by the English at Calcutta. Siraj-ud-daula, with that forbearance which is quite oriental, submitted to all the insults which the English had heaped on him. He was desirous of settling the differences between him and the English amicably and with that object in view, he sent for Mr. Watts, the Chief of the English factory at Cossimbazar. It is on record that

"Sometime before Kasimbazar was attacked, Mr. Watts acquainted the Governor and Council, that he was told from the Durbar, by order of the Nawab, that he had great reason to be dissatisfied with the late conduct of the English in general. Besides he had heard they were building new fortifications near Calcutta without ever applying to him or consulting him about it, which he by no means approved of; for he looked upon us only as a set of merchants, and therefore if we chose to reside in his dominions, under that denomination we were extremely welcome, but as prince of the country he forthwith insisted on the demolition of all those new buildings we had made." (Hastings MSS. in the British Museum, Vol. 29, p. 209).

If we are to believe Orme,

Mr. Watts had neglected to inform the presidency

of the complaints which Shiraj-ud-daula had made." Vol. II, p. 55.

Whether Mr. Watts informed the presidency or not, it is quite evident that the presidency were well acquainted with the complaints and demands of the Nawab. But bent as the English were upon mischief, they treated all the repressentations of the Nawab with great contempt. There was no other alternative left to Siraj-ud-daula than to have recourse to such means as would extirpate them from his dominions. In a letter dated 1st June, 1756, to that Armenian, Coja Wajid, he wrote :

"I have three substantial motives for extirpating the English out of my country : one that they have built strong fortifications and dug a large ditch in the King's dominions contrary to the established laws of the country ; the second is that they have abused the privilege of *dustucks* by granting them to such as were no way entitled to them, from which practices the King has suffered greatly in the revenue of his Customs. The third motive is that they give protection to such of the King's subjects as have by their behaviour in the employs they were entrusted with made themselves liable to be called to an account and instead of giving them up on demand they allow such persons to shelter themselves within their bounds from the hands of justice. For these reasons it is become requisite to drive them out."*

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 4.

The verdict of history is that the Nawab had legitimate grounds of action against the English, with whose perfidious conduct he had become thoroughly disgusted. Even an English writer, Mr. S. C. Hill, after reviewing all the circumstances which preceded the hostilities, has to admit,

"It will be seen, therefore, that Siraj-ud-daula had a show of reason in all the pretexts he alleged for his attack on the British."*

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE HOSTILITIES.

Insulted and treated with contempt by the English shop-keepers trading in his dominions, Siraj-ud-daula determined to extirpate them from Bengal. With that object in view, the first thing he did was to send his troops on 24th May to invest the factory of the English at Cossimbazar. It seems that the Cossimbazar factory was not so well-fortified as to be capable of a prolonged defence, and so without fighting, Mr. Watts had to surrender himself to the Nawab's army. This was a great blow to the prestige of the English; but the humane Siraj-ud-daula did not treat them as rebels, which they in reality were, and did not make short work of them by executing them.

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. LV.

Had he done so, he would not have been betrayed by those traders whom he dealt with leniently. For they did not possess any sense of gratitude and did not and could not appreciate the kind treatment they had received at Siraj-ud-daula's hand. Thus M. Jean Law, speaking of Mr. Watts in his Memior, wrote :—

"If he was the dupe of Siraj-ud-daula's bad faith, it must be acknowledged that he knew how to take his revenge."*

Mr. S. C. Hill writes :—

"Mr. Watts was no simpleton, and it was as much by his *diplomacy* at Murshidabad as by the victory of Clive at Plassey that Siraj-ud-daula was driven from his throne."†

The word "diplomacy" in the above extract should be considered as synonymous with treachery.

Holwell blamed Watts for surrendering the factory at Cossimbazar. In his letter dated Fulta, 30th November, 1756, to the Court of Directors, he wrote :—

"I will not subscribe to the opinion of our five Captains,.....and say their force was sufficient to resist and defend the place for any long time against the

* *Ibid* Vol. III, p. 167.

† *Ibid*, Vol, I, p. LXII,

Suba's army; but had it been defended at all he could not have attacked and taken it, without the loss of time and many of his people, and probably some of his principal officers. A stroke of this kind might have had happy consequences to your affairs; it might have inclined the *Suba* to an accommodation by cooling still more the zeal of his Ministers, generals, officers, and people,..... A defence of only 24 hours would, in its consequences, have retarded in all probability his march to Calcutta for many days,.....'*

But in the opinion of other competent judges, the factory at Cossimbazar was not strong enough to resist the assaults of Siraj-ud-daula's army.

Fortune seemed to smile on Siraj's expedition. Without his firing a shot, Cossimbazar factory fell in his hands, and on the 5th June, he began his march on Calcutta. Had he been detained for even a few days at Cossimbazar, it would have been impossible for him to proceed towards Calcutta. Mr. Holwell, in the letter from which an extract has already been given above, wrote:—

"A detention of his army before Cossimbazar for two or three days, would have brought on dirty rainy weather in his march towards us and incommoded him greatly, as well in the passage of his troops and cannon, as in the attack of our settlement; whereas, by the easy posses-

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 12.

sion he acquired of Cossimbazar, he was enabled to march against us without loss of time or obstruction from the weather, which afforded not a drop of rain during his march and attack of Calcutta, but on the 21st, at night, whilst I was prisoner in the camp, it rained heavily, and dirty weather succeeded for many days after, during which his musketry, being all match-locks, would have been rendered in a manner useless."*

Siraj-ud-daula's march on Calcutta excites our admiration and shows what a capable general he would have made, had he been served by trustworthy officers on whom he could rely. Mr. S. C. Hill writes :—

"In the hottest season of the year, in a country with no roads and with a cumbrous train of artillery drawn by elephants and oxen, his army covered a distance of about 160 miles in eleven days."†

This should be looked upon as a record march, taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration.

On his march on Calcutta, Siraj-ud-daula had to wrest the Fort of Tannah from the English. His troops fought gallantly and inflicted a crushing defeat on the English. Wrote the historian Orme :—

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* *Ibid*, Vol. II, pp. 21-13.

† *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. LXIII.

"Whilst the Nawab was advancing, it was determined to take possession of the Fort of Tannah,* which lay about 5 miles below Calcutta, on the opposite shore, and commanded the narrowest part of the river between Hughly and the Sea, with 13 pieces of cannon. Two ships of 300 tons, and two brigantines, anchored before it early in the morning of the 13th June; and as soon as they began to fire, the Moorish garrison, which did not exceed 50 men, fled; on which some Europeans and Laskars landed; and having disabled part of the cannon, flung the rest into the river. But the next day they were attacked by a detachment of 2,000 men, sent from Hugley, who stormed the fort, drove them to their boats, and then began to fire, with their matchlocks and two small fieldpieces, on the vessels, which endeavoured in vain with their cannon and musketry to dislodge them. The next day a reinforcement of 30 soldiers were sent from Calcutta, but the cannonade having made no impression, they and the vessels returned to the town." (Orme, Vol. II, pp. 59-60).

It is not necessary to describe in great detail the fighting that took place for the capture of Calcutta. The Nawab thought that the Christians of the French and Dutch nationalities who were trading in his dominions would assist him in his chastisement of the British. Had there been any far-seeing statesmen among

* According to Rev. Long, the Fort of Tannah occupied the grounds which now constitute the Royal Botanical Gardens, Shibpur.

those nations, they would have most willingly rendered all the help that lay in their power to the Nawab, for by so doing they would have driven away their most formidable rivals from the richest part of India. But unfortunately for them, they did not do so and as a result of this it was they who were driven out of India.

We cannot sufficiently praise Siraj-ud-daula for his love of peace. After having captured Cossimbazar, he thought that the English would still come to terms. The Chief of the Cossimbazar factory, Mr. Watts, was his prisoner. In the course of a letter which he together with another of his co-prisoners named Mr. Collet wrote from Chandernagore, dated 17th July, 1756, to the Court of Directors, the following passage occurs :—

"We are persuaded this dismal catastrophy of your Honors' Estate in Bengal being plundered, your settlements lost, your servants destroyed and ruined with some hundred thousands of Calcutta inhabitants might have been prevented had the Governor and Council thought proper to have compromised matters for a sum of money. And as a proof, the Nabob touched nothing at Cossimbazar but the warlike stores or at any of the other factorys or *aurangs* till he had taken Calcutta. Roydulub, the Nabob's *duan* and who commanded the van of the army, likewise frequently sent for the Chief, while he was prisoner in the Camp, and told him smiling that we must pay a *crore* of rupees, and when

the Chief assured him the Company's whole estate did not amount to that sum he then asked him if they would pay 20 *lacks* of rupees, to which the Chief answered again that the Company's annual trade to Bengal was not more than the demand he made. The *duan* then desired to know what they could afford to pay, to which he replyed he had no powers to treat, but if the *duan* would permit him to write to Calcutta he should then be able to inform him. This request the *duan* absolutely refused, but told him if any proposals of accommodation were made first from Calcutta he might then write as often as he pleased. We being surrounded and strictly watched night and day by the Nabob's people, we had no opportunity of writing to Calcutta till we were opposite to Hughly, where we got permission to write to the Dutch Director for some provisions, to whom we sent a letter to be forwarded to Calcutta, wherein we wrote that if the Governor and Council would send a proper person to the Camp or empower us to act, we flattered ourselves that even then the dispute with the Nabob might be finished for a sum of money.'*

But the British authorities at Calcutta were resolved not to come to any agreement with the Nawab.† Siraj-ud-daula was moderate in his demands and desirous of living on terms of peace with all his neighbours. But he was not acquainted with the character of the foreign traders who wanted to cross swords with him.

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* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 103.

† *Ibid*, p. 104.

But the English knew that they were not strong enough to meet the Nawab's army in the open field and in fair fight. So they tried their best to raise traitors and encourage desertions in the Nawab's camp. Governor Drake in his Narrative, dated 19th July, 1756, wrote :—

"It was essayed to draw from the Nabob's army the several Europeans and Portugueze by application in writing from the priests who by three letters represented to them how contrary it was to Christianity their taking arms in the service of the Moors against Christians, with threats from those priests unless they quitted the evil way they were in and came to our assistance where they would be received into pay. These letters were sent to the Nabob's Camp to be delivered the first Christian could be met with. On receipt thereof they declared there was no means left for them to escape, that had they been before advised of the offence they were committing they could possibly have found an opportunity of coming over to us."*

Indian princes always came to grief by their keeping in their pay Christian adventurers of different nationalities who never possessed any sense of honor and gratitude and were ready to betray their masters, whose salt they had eaten, for the sake of filthy lucre. What would have happened if the Indian princes had imitated the Christian English and adopted their tactics and tried to

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 140—141.

raise traitors and encourage desertions in the ranks of the Sepoys in the service of the Christians by instructing Hindu priests and Moslem mullas to remonstrate with them on the wickedness of fighting under the flag of any Christian nation against Indians, whether Hindus or Mussalmans? The Christian supremacy could not then have been established in India.

Although the English traders were averse to come to any agreement with the Nawab, yet, as said above, they knew that they would not be able to stand against the troops of Siraj-ud-daula in open and fair fight. Their chief deficiencies were the want of guns and powder. No one has ever given credit to the English traders for not being selfish. With them selfish motives overpowered all other considerations. So on the receipt of the intelligence of the Nawab's intended attack on Calcutta, it was decided not to defend the native town. Writes Governor Drake in the Narative which has been referred to above:—

"The black merchants and inhabitants were greatly terrified at the near approach of Siraj-ud-daula's army, sending their women and effects to different parts of the country. They had before been sent for and ordered to erect *futtocks* in different streets of the Black Town,....."*

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 139.

The merchants and inhabitants of the native town of Calcutta did not consider it worth their while to carry out the orders of the Christian authorities, knowing fully well that they would not receive any protection at the hands of the latter. To raise *futtacks* or to obstruct the roads and passages would not have prevented the entrance of Siraj's army into Calcutta. So with the exception of one Govind Ram Mitter, who, according to Governor Drake's account,

"employed several hands at his part of the town by Baag Bazar in felling down trees and cutting through the roads to break the enemy's passage, stopped up the small avenues leading into our town, and destroyed many houses where the enemy might have obtained shelter."*

no one else did what the English desired them to do. They did not do it because they saw the heartless selfishness of the English, who, instead of giving them protection, burnt many of their houses. Governor Drake wrote :—

"Frequent alarms of the near approach of the enemy made us resolve to make as clear a passage as we could to oppose the attack, for which purpose we set fire to all the straw houses within our Lines, which fire spread over a much greater distance."†

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* *Ibid*, p. 140.

† *Ibid*, p. 144.

No wonder that the coolies, lascars and servants deserted the English. But while no protection was given to the non-Christian natives of Calcutta, every facility was afforded to the Christian Armenians and Portuguese to fill with their women, children and slaves the houses adjacent to the factory.

The Nawab reached Calcutta on the 16th June. There were some skirmishes on that and the following day, but the great attack was reserved by the Nawab for the 18th, which, being Friday, is held to be a lucky day in the Muhammadan calendar; and besides the 18th June, 1756, corresponded to the 19th Ramazan, one of the fortunate days of that great Muhammadan fast. On the day, in anticipation of the fighting, the English authorities at Calcutta issued the brutal and inhuman order that no quarter was to be given to the enemy.*

But the fact of refusing to give quarter to the enemy dwindles into insignificance when compared the with other enormities which the English had been perpetrating at Calcutta. Amir Chand, the "crafty" Omychand of Christian writers, was of great help to the English.

* *Ibid*, p. 258.

Without him they could not have built up their colossal trade in Bengal. But for his services rendered to the English, he received nothing but insults and injuries at their hands. When Calcutta was to be attacked, with their guilty conscience, they imagined that Amir Chand might turn against them and render aid to Siraj-ud-daula. So they considered it expedient to make him a prisoner. When the soldiers were sent to his house, he surrendered himself without resistance. But the Christians were not satisfied with making him alone a prisoner. His brother-in-law Hazari-Mall, and his guest Krishna Das, son of Raj Bullabh, were also to be made prisoners by them. These two men did not surrender so easily as Amir Chand had done. They ordered their servants to fire upon the soldiers. Hazari Mall fought bravely and was not captured till he had lost his left hand.

Krishna Das was under the protection of the English, and it is revolting to the feeling of every Oriental when he sees a guest ill-treated or betrayed by his host. This is against the code of ethics and honor of every Oriental nation. So they were quite disgusted with the conduct of the English.

But their blood must have boiled with indignation when they saw the English sending their soldiers to the apartments of the females of the household of Amir Chand. The object of these soldiers can be very easily imagined. It was more than what the flesh and blood of the faithful Jamadar of Amir Chand could bear. At that critical moment, what he did would have exacted the admiration of all the thoughtful world, had it found a historian like Thucydides or Gibbon to record the deed. Writes Orme :—

"The head of the peons, who was an Indian of a high caste, set fire to the house, and, in order to save the women of the family from the dishonor of being exposed to strangers, entered their apartments, and killed, it is said, thirteen of them with his own hand, after which, he stabbed himself, but contrary to his intention, not mortally." (Vol II, p. 60)

But notwithstanding all their precautions and excesses, committed on those who were under their protection and therefore quite helpless to defend themselves, the English were miserably beaten. The Christian gunners in the service of the Nawab were not true to their salt ; nay, they were treacherous. Even Mr. S. C Hill is forced to write that,

"The enemy's big guns were perhaps purposely too badly served by the French and Portuguese gunners to produce any great effect,....."*

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. LXXXVII.

But the Nawab's non-Christian soldiers served him very faithfully. From a letter from the East Indies, dated 15th December, 1756, which appeared in *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1757, it was stated that

"All the mischief proceeded from the Counsellor's houses being built close round the Fort. In these houses the enemy lodged themselves, and galled the English greatly."*

It was impossible for the English to stand upon the ramparts of the Fort and effectively reply to the enemy's fire. So notwithstanding the treachery among the Christian gunners in the service of Siraj-ud-daula, the English could not make any impression on the Moslem prince's troops. On the contrary, they were very ignominiously beaten. All their efforts were in vain. Writes one of the historians of their race and creed:—

"In such circumstances, the expediency of abandoning the fort and retreating on ship-board naturally occurred to the besieged, and such a retreat might have been made without dishonour. But the want of concert, together with the criminal eagarness manifested by some of the principal servants of the Company to provide for their own safety at any sacrifice, made the closing scene of the siege one of the most disgraceful in which Englishmen

* *Ibid*, Vol. III. p. 73.

have ever been engaged." (Thornton's History of the British Empire, Vol. I, p. 190).

The truth is that the English, who were naturally cowards, were thoroughly demoralized by the exhibition of superior military tactics by Siraj-ud-daula. Mr. S. C. Hill writes

"that the men were no longer under control, many of the militia were drunk, and some had even drawn their bayonets on the officers who called them to their duty."*

How demoralized the foreigners in the Fort had become is clear from the evidence of one Mr. John Cooke.

"From the time that we were confined to the defence of the fort itself, nothing was to be seen but disorder, riots and confusion. Everybody was officious in advising, but no one was properly qualified to give advice."†

If the besieged foreigners were not totally annihilated, it was due to the generosity and chivalry of the besiegers. Thus proceeded Mr. Cooke in his evidence, from which the extract has been made above:

"The factory was so crowded with Portuguese women and unnecessary people that it would have been impossible to have found provisions enough for one week, even had our walls and garrison been able to resist the efforts of the enemy. In this situation it was lucky for us the Moors

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. LXXX.
† *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 296.

(who never fight in the night) suspended their operations as soon as it was dark, and gave us, by that means, an opportunjty of consulting and debating on what was to be done."

Now an attempt was made by the English to negotiate with the Nawab.

"Mr. Holwell now begged Omichand, who had been all the time a prisoner, to go to the Nawab and ask for terms ; but, enraged at the treatment he had recieved, or else perfectly certain that the Nawab was implacable, he refused to give any assistance, and was left to nurse his wrath in prison."*

So there was nothing left for the Christians but flight and retreat. There were ships ready to take them off and they effected their retreat in great disgrace. It was

"a retreat which, from the circumstances attending it, seemed certain to be disastrous, for on the fleet there was no order and no discipline. The half-caste women were so little sensible of their danger that it was with the utmost difficulty that they could be persuaded to go below decks when the ships were under fire whilst passing Tanna Fort, and a French account asserts that had the natives had a few gunners who knew their business not a ship would have escaped. Whilst passing down they met a French ship, *Le Silhouet*, and forced the commander to give them some provisions. So desperate was their condition that the French wrote to their

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. LXXXI.

captains to be on their guard lest the British should resort to violence in order to obtain supplies, and so possibly involve them in trouble with the Nawab."*

THE CAPTURE OF CALCUTTA.

The humiliation of the Company's servants was complete. They had deliberately insulted and treated Siraj-ud-daula with contempt. And now they had to rue their conduct. Siraj, after the capture of the fort at Cossimbazar, is reported to have exclaimed :—

"Look now at those Englishmen, who were once so proud that they did not wish to receive me in their houses."†

He could have repeated the same words with greater emphasis after the capture of Calcutta.

Bengal was called by Muhammadan writers the 'Paradise of India.' Wrote M. Jean Law in his Memoir :—

"In all the official papers, *firmans*, *parwanas* of the Mogal Empire, when there is question of Bengal, it is never named without adding these words, 'Paradise of India,' an epithet given to it *par excellence*. The country supplies all its own wants by its fruitfulness and the variety of its production, of the other parts of the Empire all stand in need."

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* *Ibid*, Vol. I. p. LXX,V.

† *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 162-163.

So the Christian English with whom "*£. s. d.* is their Trinity," must have felt very keenly the humiliation by the loss of Calcutta. This is evident from the letter of Mr. Holwell to the Court of Directors, dated 30th November, 1756, who referred to the expulsion of the English from Calcutta, in the words,

"as fatal and melancholy a catastrophe as ever the annals of any people, or colony of people, suffered since the days of Adam."

The Christians were expelled from "the Paradise," but like their first ancestor, not for ever. Unfortunately, Siraj was not thoroughly acquainted with their character. Had it been so, he would have exterminated them root and branch. They would have been treated as rebels, which, in fact, they were. Instead of being made prisoners, they would have been executed. When the Nawab and his army came to attack Calcutta it is on record that,

"Orders were issued out that no quarter was to be given to the enemy."*

So no blame could have attached to Siraj-ud-dowla had he executed English who fell in his hands at the capture of Calcutta. But Siraj was an

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 258.

oriental, and belonged to that part of the world which produced Buddha, Christ and Mahomed. With his mother's milk he had imbibed lessons of forgiveness. And hence in the hour of his triumph, he showed that magnanimity and generosity of conduct which one would look for in vain in an occidental.

Some writers of Indian history who credited Siraj with everything that is bad in human nature gave it as their opinion that the moderation of the Nawab was due to the intercession of the Nawab's grand-mother, the widow of Ali Verdi, and probably also to his mother, Amina Begam, for the prisoners.*

Mr. S. C. Hill says that,

"The interest of these ladies in the English merchants may have been partly due to the fact that they also were accustomed to speculate in commerce."†

If this is true, Bengal was lost to the Nawab and his life sacrificed, because some of the ladies of his household made paltry profits by speculating in commerce, the principal article of which in those days was saltpetre. Would that these Muhammadan ladies had remembered the following

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* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. XCII.

† *Ibid*, loc. cit.

advice given by the Sultan of Turkey to Aurangzeb and on which the latter acted :

"The religious zeal of Aurangzeb seems to have reached the ears of the Sultan of Turkey. Both were Sunnis. The Sultan wrote to Aurangzeb begging him to forbid his subjects from selling saltpetre to Christians, as it was often burnt for the destruction of good Muhammadans. Aurangzeb issued the necessary prohibition, and the English lost for a while their saltpetre trade at Patna."*

The Nawabs of Bengal should have always acted on the above advice.

If Siraj-ud-daula did not exterminate the English, it was because he entertained great contempt for them. For this also he had to pay dearly with his life. It is a Persian proverb which says, never consider an enemy contemptible.

English historians have associated the capture of Calcutta with a horrible tragedy, designated by them as "The Black Hole". Whether such a tragedy occurred is more than doubtful, and even if it did, we for our part fail to see how Siraj could have been held responsible for it or any blame could have been attached to him.

On Sunday, the 20th of June, 1756, when the Nawab's soldiers assaulted and entered the fort,

* Talboys Wheeler's *Early Records of British India*, p. 162.

the besieged foreigners were not ill-used by them. According to the narrative of the Governor Drake, dated 19th July, 1756, Siraj also entered the fort and

"held a kind of *Durbar* there to receive the compliments of his officers,.....The prisoners were brought before him and implored his mercy, when he was carried to another place where Mr. Holwell was conducted to him with his hands bound.....Thus was the loss of our Settlement completed and Calcutta destroyed.*

Writes Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"The native soldiers had plundered the Europeans of their valuables, but did not ill-treat them, and the Muhammadan priests were occupied in singing a song of thanksgiving. Suddenly the scene changed. Some European soldiers had made themselves drunk and assaulted the natives. The latter complained to the Nawab, who asked where the Europeans were accustomed to confine soldiers who had misbehaved in any way. He was told in the Black Hole, and, as some of his officers suggested it would be dangerous to leave so many prisoners at large during the night, ordered that they should all be confined in it. The native officers, who were enraged at the great losses inflicted on them by the defenders, for it is said 5000 perished in the siege, applied this order to all the prisoners without distinction, and to the number of 146 they were crowded into a little chamber intended to hold only one or two private soldiers, and only about 18 feet square, and this

* *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 160.

upon one of the hottest nights of the year. The dreadful suffering that followed, the madness which drove the prisoners to trample each other down and to fight for the water which only added to their torture, the insults they poured upon their jailors in order to induce them to fire on them and so end their misery, and the brutal delight of the native soldiers at a sight which they looked upon as a *tamāshā*, are all told in Mr. Holwell's narrative, than which nothing more pathetic is to be found in the annals of the British in India. From 7 o'clock in the evening to 6 o'clock in the morning this agony lasted, for even the native officers who pitied them dared not disturb the Nabob before he awoke from his slumbers, 'when only twenty-three out of one hundred and forty-six who went in came out alive, the ghastlyest forms that were ever seen alive, from this infernal scene of horror.' "*

Such is the account given by English writers of what they designate as the Black Hole Tragedy. It is a pity that the above-mentioned writer has not tried to refute the arguments advanced by the author of *Siraj-ud-dowla*, a work in Bengalee in which an attempt has been made to prove that the Black Hole tragedy is a myth.

Dr. Bhola Nath Chunder, the talented author of the *Travels of a Hindoo*, wrote in the *Calcutta University Magazine* for 1895 :—

"As to the Black-Hole tragedy.....I have a very

* *Ibid.*, Vol I, p. XC.

doubtful faith in its account. Holwell, one of the fellow-sufferers, was the first to publish it to the world. But I have always questioned it to myself, how could 146 beings be squeezed into a room 18 feet square even if it were possible to closely pack them like the seeds within a pomegranate, or like the bags in a ship's hold, made into one mass by packets shoved in here and there into the interstices? Geometry contradicting arithmetic gives the lie to the story. It is little better than a bogey against which was raised an uproar of pity."

Now, the exact measurement of the Black Hole is uncertain. Captain Grant in his account of the loss of Calcutta, dated Fulta, 13th July, 1756, wrote :—

"And as such as were unhappy as to be taken prisoners were at night put into the Black Hole, a place about 16 foot square, to the number of near 200 Europeans, Portuguese and Armenians, of which many were wounded. They were so crowded one upon another in this narrow confinement that by the heat and suffocation not above ten of the number survived till morning."*

Captain Grant's account materially differs from the version received among English writers as to the size of the Black Hole, the number of men incarcerated in it and of the survivors.

According to Dr. C. R. Wilson,

"The area of Black Hole is 18 ft. by 14 ft. 10 in. This

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* *Old Fort William in Bengal*, by Dr. C. R. Wilson Vol. II, p. 59.

allows just 267 sq. ft. of area for 146 persons, or less than 2 sq. ft. each."*

But Dr. Wilson never troubled himself to inquire how he was to place 146 persons in a room the area of which was not more than 267 sq. ft. On an average, it is necessary to allow a man, whether sitting or standing, not less than three square feet of space. According to that calculation not more than 89 persons could have been accommodated in the Black Hole.

This is on the assumption that such a tragedy as that of the Black Hole ever occurred. But there are strong reasons to suspect the reality of its occurrence. There is no mention of the incident in Mussalman chronicles of the time, *e.g.*, Syed Golam Hossain's *Seir-ul-Mutakharin*, or in the Proceedings Book of the English who had taken refuge at Fulta, or in the reports of the debates of the Madras Council. There is no mention of it in the letters of Clive and Watson to the Nawab, or in the treaty of Alinagar. Clive in his letter to the Court of Directors explaining the reason why Siraj-ud-daula was dethroned does not even refer to the Black Hole incident. The treaty or rather the

* *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 245.

conspiracy that was entered into by the English with Meer Jaffer, stipulates for damages of every kind, but no compensation for the surviving relatives of those alleged to have died in the Black Hole finds a place in it. There is no mention of the incident in the Note read by Mr. Holwell before the Select Committee on the 4th August, 1760.

Clive was sent to Bengal on the recommendation of his friend Robert Orme, the historian, by whom he was charged to punish those who took part in the perpetration of the tragedy. That Clive did nothing of the sort is perhaps a very strong proof of the non-occurrence of the incident.

It should also be borne in mind that Mr. Holwell never possessed any great reputation for scrupulous regard for truth. His co-religionists and compatriots considered him as a teller of specious fibs. Thus almost all his contemporaries looked upon his story of the dying advice of Ali Verdy Khan to Siraj as a "specious fable".

Mr. John Zephaniah Holwell was born in Dublin in 1711. He chose medicine as his profession and came out to Calcutta as Surgeon's mate to an Indiaman in 1732. After practising his profession for some years, he became Zemindar of Cal-

cutta, a post carrying with it the duties of Collector and of Judge. He was also appointed a member of the Council. When Siraj-ud-daula attacked Calcutta, he was made a prisoner, but subsequently released, and after joining his countrymen at Fulta, he proceeded home with despatches on board the *Syren* sloop. It was during this voyage that he wrote his 32-page letter to William Davis Esq., dated the 28th day of February, 1757, containing the narrative of the Black Hole. When he returned from his native land to Bengal, Siraj-ud-daula had been assassinated and Meer Jaffer had been elevated to the throne of Bengal by the treachery and fraud of the English. How the assassination of Siraj and accession of Meer Jaffer benefited the English will be mentioned further on. But it will suffice here to say that Holwell was not forgotten by Meer Jaffer, who paid him one *lakh* of Rupees. But Holwell was not grateful to him,—of course a *grateful* Christian English was a *rara avis* in those days—for the word gratitude, like the words honor, honesty and veracity, did not find a place in their vocabulary. But the ungrateful conduct of Holwell is simply outrageous. To depose Meer Jaffer and to get Meer Kassim elevated in his stead, from whom, according to the Report of the Committee of the

House of Commons, 1772, he received more than three lakhs of Rupees, he did not scruple to circulate lies and blacken the character of his benefactor.

Appendix 9 to the first report on the nature, state and condition of the East India Company published in 1772 shows to what depth of degradation Holwell stooped in order to get Meer Jaffer deposed from the *Musnad* of Bengal. In a memorial penned by him setting forth the causes of the late change in the subahship of Bengal, it was stated that

"The Nabob *Jaffer Allee Cawn*, was of a temper extremely tyrannical and avaricious, at the same time very indolent ;.....numberless are the instances of men, of all degrees, whose blood he has spilt without the least assigned reason. To learn the names and circumstances of all these sufferers, would be a work of time ; but some of the most striking examples are the following :—

".....*Gasseta Begum*, Widow of the Nabob *Shehamat Jung ;*

"*Omna Begum*, Mother of the Nabob *Sirajah-Dowla ;*

"*Muzado Dowla*, the son of *Padsha Coolly Cawn*, adopted by *Shehamut Jung* ;

"*Lutfen Nissa Begum*, Widow of the Nabob *Serajah-Dowla* ;

"Her Infant, Daughter of *Serajah Dowla.*

"The five unhappy sufferers,.....perished all in one Night at *Dacca*, about the month of *June* 1760 ; where they

had been detained prisoners since the Accession of *Jaffer Allee Cawn* to the subahship ; a Parwannah was sent to *Jassaret Cawn*, the Naib of *Dacca*, to put to death all the Survivors of the family, of the Nabobs, *Aliverdee Cawn*, *Shehamut Jang*, and *Serajah-Dowlah* ; but upon his declining to obey so cruel an order, the messenger, who had private instructions to execute this tragedy, in case of the other's refusal, took them from the place of their confinement ; and having carried them out at midnight upon the river, massacred and drowned them, with about 20 women of inferior note, and attendants."

The above was a tissue of gross falsehoods. In the supplement to the letter addressed to the Hon'ble Court of Directors for affairs of the Hon'ble United Company of merchants of England trading to the East Indies by Clive and others from Fort William, the 1st October, 1765, it is stated :

"26. In justice to the memory of the late Nabob *Meer Jaffer*, we think it incumbent on us to acquaint you, that the horrible massacres wherewith he is charged by Mr. *Holwell*, in his 'Address to the Proprietors of *East India* Stock' (p. 40), are cruel aspersions on the character of that Prince, which have not the least foundation in truth. The several persons there affirmed, and who have been generally thought to have been murdered by his order, are all now living, except two,....."

If Mr. Holwell did not scruple to vilify the character of his benefactor Meer Jaffer, by propagating barefaced lies, what wonder he should have invented the story of the Black Hole Trage-

dy in order to calumniate Siraj-ud-daula, from whom he received some injuries at least.

The well-known English philosopher and thinker, Mr. Herbert Spencer, mentioned the following instance of the utter disregard of truth exhibited by the Christian nations of the West in the beginning of the present century. Referring to the pretext which the Christian nations considered as justifying their invasion of China, Herbert Spencer wrote :

"There came first the sensational accounts of a massacre at Pekin, describing in detail the stubborn resistance of the Europeans, the desperate hand-to-hand encounter, the final overwhelming of the small band, followed by particulars of Chinese atrocities ; and then there came in a few days proof that this circumstantial account was utterly baseless – there had been no massacre, no atrocities."*

If in these days of railways, steamers and telegraphs, Europeans do not blush to spread lies, half, if not fully, conscious all the time that such lies would be after all detected, it is small wonder that in those days when there was no facility of communication, they propagated falsehoods knowing that these would not be easily detected, nay, on the contrary, these would go down to posterity as gospel truths.

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* *Facts and Comments.*

But even assuming for the sake of argument that such a tragedy as that of the Black Hole occurred, we do not see how Siraj could be blamed for it. Certainly he had not built the dungeon. The historian James Mill writes :—

"The Subahdar, (Siraj-ud-daula), though humanity was no part of his character, appears not on the present occasion to have intended cruelty; for when Mr. Holwell was carried into his presence with his hands tied, he ordered them to be set loose, and assured him, upon the faith of a soldier, that of the heads of him and his companions, not a hair should be touched. When evening, however, came, it was a question with the guards to whom they were intrusted, how they might be secured for the night. Some search was made for a convenient apartment; but none was found; upon which information was obtained of a place which the English themselves had employed as a prison. Into this, without further inquiry, they were impelled. It was unhappily a small, ill-aired, and unwholesome dungeon, called the Black Hole, and the English had their own practice to thank for suggesting it to the officers of the Subahdar as a fit place of confinement."*

Mr. H. Beveridge, in his paper on "Old places in Murshidabad" contributed to the *Calcutta Review* for April, 1892†, says :—

"Perhaps we ought not to say very much about the Black Hole, or regard it as a detestable instance of

* Vol. III (fifth edition), p. 117.

† Page 345.

malignity on the part of Siraj-ud-daula, seeing that a similar misadventure occurred in the Amritsar District on 1st August, 1857. Mr. Cooper tells us how a great number of captured sepoys were shut up in a large, round tower, or, bastion, and how, after 237 of them had been taken out and shot, it was reported that the remainder would not come out. "The doors were opened, and behold! they were nearly all dead. Unconsciously the tragedy of Holwell's Black Hole had been re-enacted... .....forty-five bodies—dead from fright, exhaustion, fatigue, heat and partial suffocation—were dragged into light." (*The Crisis in the Punjab*, p. 162)."

Mr. S. C. Hill writes :—

"Probably the reference to the Black Hole is an amplification, for in the careless talk of Calcutta the Black Hole and Fort William seem to have been often confounded."*

If the above be true, then it affords a clue to the story of the Black Hole Tragedy. It means that the men who were unable to escape to the ships on the river were consequently made and kept prisoners in the Fort William. But even the most careful search has failed to find the names of the 123 alleged to have perished in the Black Hole. The most recent writer, Mr. S. C. Hill, says—

"In the Black Hole 123 perished, of whom we can trace the names of only 56 ;....."†

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* *Bengal in 1756-1757*, Vol. I, p. XCVI.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. XCIV.

The question naturally arises, why cannot the names of the remaining 67 be traced ? Perhaps there were not so many as 123 Christian persons in the Fort when it was captured by Siraj-ud-daula.

All that we have said above induces us to believe that the Black Hole tragedy was a myth invented by the interested Europeans to serve their ulterior ends. If 56 persons died, they did not die of suffocation in the Black Hole, but of their sickness and wounds in the Fort ; for only such persons were left behind as were unable to make their escape to the ships on the river.

THE NAWAB'S RETURN TO HIS CAPITAL.

Siraj-ud-daula, after wresting Calcutta from the hands of the English, appointed Raja Manick Chand as its governor and changed its name to Alinagar. As said before, Siraj entertained a very mean and contemptible opinion of the English and therefore did not extirpate them. Scrafton in his Reflections, pp. 58, says :—

"It may appear a matter of wonder why the *Soubah* permitted us to remain so quietly at Fulta till we were become formidable to him, which I can only account for from his mean opinion of us,.....and had no idea of our attempting to return by force."

The Chief of the French factory at Cossimbazar, M. Jean Law, says :—

"Siraj-ud-daula had the most extravagant contempt for Europeans ; a pair of slippers, said he, is all that is needed to govern them. Their number, according to him, could not in all Europe come up to more than ten or twelve thousand men. What fear, then, could he have of the English nation, which could not present to his mind more than a quarter of the whole ? He was, therefore, very far from thinking that the English could entertain the idea of re-establishing themselves by force. To humiliate themselves—to offer money with one hand, and receive joyously with the other his permission to re-establish themselves—was the whole project which he could naturally suppose them to have formed. It is to this idea, without doubt, that the tranquility in which he left them at Fulta is due."*

Siraj was a simple-minded oriental, who did not understand the lying and deceitful nature of the occidental traders in his dominions. It was given out by the English that they were waiting at Fulta only until favourable weather allowed them to set out for Madras. So instead of molesting them, Siraj was kind to them. Thus Mr. Tooke in his Narrative of the capture of Calcutta wrote :—

"Upon our first arrival at Fulta we found provisions and necessarys very scarce, though soon after, upon the

* *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 176.

Nabob's hearing (as is reported) that the ships intended leaving the river, he ordered the *buzars* or markets to be opened, that he might prevent our plundering and get rid of us the sooner, and as the country was farmed by Manick Chand the Nabob's *duan* (who was appointed President at Calcutta after it was taken) he directed the *buzar* to be continued, as long as we stayed at Fulta, when we had plenty of everything ;....."*

But the English at Fulta returned the kindness of the Nawab by intriguing against him. Thus wrote Major Killpatrick to the Court of Directors, dated, camp near Fort William, 25 January, 1757 :—

"What was done since I last had the honour of writing to you, and before the arrival of the squadron, was little more than in keeping up a correspondence with some principal people in the country ; which answered almost all our intentions, in gaining of time and having provisions supplyed to us while we were obliged to remain inactive,....."†

Such was the sense of gratitude possessed by the English who professed Christianity, which teaches, "Do unto others", etc !

The Nawab, with that magnanimity which was quite oriental, did not strike the fallen foes, but left Calcutta on the 24th June, 1756 and arrived at

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* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 301.

† *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 164.

Hugli on the following day. Here he held a Durbar, at which the representatives of the French and Dutch factories were present. The former paid him $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs and the latter $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees as contributions to the war expenses. These sums also included *nazaranah* or complimentary presents due on the Nawab's accession. Of course there was no intention on the part of the Nawab to destroy the settlements of those two nations, for had he been inclined to do so, he could have done it at this opportune moment. He reached Murshidabad on the 11th July, 1756, amid great rejoicings.

But he was not to live long in peace there, as his cousin Shaukat Jung had again raised the standard of revolt against him. As soon as the rains were over, he proceeded against Shaukut Jang. The armies of the two princes met at Rajmahal, where on the 16th of October, 1756, a battle was fought in which Shaukat was killed and Siraj was victorious. He returned to Murshidabad in triumph and received the congratulations of his subjects, as well as the *firman* of the Emperor of Dehli, confirming him as Nawab of Bengal, Behar and Orissa.

It is now necessary to turn to the English refugees at Fulta. It has been said before that they

were not only left unmolested, but were very kindly treated by the orders of the Nawab. On the other hand, the sense of gratitude possessed by the English was such that they were, during their stay at Fulta, intriguing and conspiring against him. They sent the news of their disaster to Madras and asked for reinforcements to recapture Calcutta. In the meanwhile they

"determined to open negotiations with the Nawab for their restoration, so as to conceal their real reasons for staying at Fulta."*

The news of the outbreak of hostilities in Bengal had arrived at Madras on the 13th July and one Major Killpatrick with 200 troops embarked on the *Delaware* on the 21st July and arrived at Fulta on the last day of that month. Writes Mr S. C. Hill :—

"*To deceive the Nawab*, who might be supposed to have been alarmed at the news of his arrival, Major Killpatrick had already been instructed on the 15th to write and assure him that the British did not bear malice for what had happened in the past, and to ask for a supply of provisions. This letter was ultimately sent to Mr. Hastings, who was still at Cossimbazar, for delivery.†

The above needs no comments ; the words put in italics tell their own tale.

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* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CXI.

† *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CXV.

The news of the loss of Cossimbazar reached Madras on the 3rd August, 1756 and that of the capture of Calcutta on the 16th. The English Councillors of Madras met on the 17th and 18th August to devise measures for the recapture of Calcutta. Admiral Watson was consulted on the subject, but he advised the delay of any expedition until the end of September, so that the troops might escape the rainy season.

Clive had been absent from Madras, but on his return there, very probably on the persuasion of his friend Robert Orme, well-known afterwards as the historian of India, he volunteered to command the expedition to Bengal.

At that time there was an apprehension of the outbreak of war between England and France, and the French were very strong in southern India. It was not thought probable that if war broke out in Europe, the French would observe neutrality in India. However, it was decided by the Madras Council to send a very large force in order to recover Bengal. In the letter from the Select Committee, Fort Saint George, to the Select Committee, Fort William, dated 21st February, 1757, it was written :—

"After struggling with many difficulties in order to put the expedition upon the most advantageous footing as well

as well with regard to the Company as private sufferers, we drained all the garrisons upon the coast to strengthen the detachment preparing for Bengal, and to secure to the utmost of our power a speedy success to our designs.

"But as we were in daily expectation of war with France, and had reason also from the advices of the Secret Committee to apprehend the appearance of a considerable French fleet, we could by no means resolve to put it out of our own power to defend the certain possessions of the Company on this Coast for the hope of uncertain acquisitions in Bengal.

"Therefore, in order to provide for both necessities to make an effort for the re-establishment of the Company's affairs in Bengal, and still to have in our hands a security for their possessions on this Coast, in case of need, there was no other method but reserving to ourselves the power of recalling our troops."*

Under the above conditions, the troops consisting of about 800 Europeans and 1300 Sepoys and lascars left Madras in the middle of October, 1706.

The command of the expedition was given to Admiral Watson by sea and to Colonel Clive by land.

The "Christian" Councillors of Madras did not merely want the restoration of their trade privileges in Bengal but they advised their compatriots and co-religionists to intrigue and conspire against the Nawab and bring about a revolution in

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, 233.

that land. In their letter of 13th October, 1756, the Madras Councillors wrote to the Select Committee, Fort William :—

"The mere retaking of Calcutta should we think by no means be the end of this undertaking,—not only their settlements and factories should be restored but all their privileges established in the full extent granted by the *Great Mogul*, and ample reparation made to them for the loss they have lately sustained ; otherwise we are of opinion it would have been better nothing had been attempted, than to have added the heavy charge of this armament to their former loss, without securing their colonies and trade from future insults and exactions.

"Should the Nabob on the news of the arrival of these forces, make offers tending to the acquiring to the Company the before mentioned advantages, rather than risque the success of a war, we think that sentiments of revenging injuries, although they were never more just, should give place to the necessity of sparing as far as possible the many bad consequences of war, besides the expence of the Company's treasures, but we are of opinion that the sword should go hand in hand with the pen, and that on the arrival of the present armament, hostilities should immediately commence with the utmost vigour. These hostilities must be of every kind which can either distress his dominions and estate or bring reprisals into our possession.

"We need not represent to you the great advantage which we think it will be to the military operations, and the influence it will have in the Nabob's Councils to effect a junction with any powers in the provinces of Bengal that

may be dissatisfied with the violences of the Nabob's Government, or that may have pretensions to the Nabobship." *

With such treacherous intentions and designs the expedition started for Bengal. The voyage was, by no means a pleasant one, as scurvy and sickness broke out on many of the ships. But the forces reached their destination by the middle of December, 1756.

Proceedings of the English.

After arriving in Bengal, Clive addressed on 15th December, 1756, a letter to Raja Manik Chand, Siraj's Governor of Calcutta. In this letter was enclosed the draft of a letter for the Nawab. Clive's letter to the Nawab not being in proper tone, Manik Chand wrote to him on the 23rd December, 1756, forwarding to him copy of a form for a letter which he suggested should be sent by Clive to the Nawab. Regarding Clive's draft of the letter addressed to the Nawab, Manik Chand wrote :—

"Finding in it many inproper expressions and concluding that by sending me the copy you desired to know my sentiments upon it, I have, therefore, made some alterations in it and return it entrusted to Radha Kissen Mullick, who will deliver it to you. You will write your letter after that

* *Ibid*, vol. 1, pp 239-240.

form and dispatch it again to me, and I will forward it to the Nawab. You write that you are desirous of peaceable measures. I likewise am as desirous, as nothing is better than peace. To take away every cause of ill-will or contention, this is the part of a good man. For the rest you will be informed from Radha Kissen of my further sentiments." *

While the non-Christian oriental prince and his representative desired nothing better than peace, the Christians who pray every day to God that His kingdom come on Earth as it is in Heaven were eagerly thirsting for blood. Clive wrote to Manik Chand on the 25th December, 1756 :—

"I cannot consistently with my duty to the Company or their honour, accept of your advice in writing to the Nabob a letter couched in such a stile, which, however proper it might have been before the taking of Calcutta, would but ill-suit with the present time, when we are come to demand satisfaction for the injuries done us by the Nabob, not to entreat his favour, and with a force which we think sufficient to vindicate our claim." †

But it was not convenient for the English to immediately declare war against the Nawab. No, they were not prepared for it. Like sly foxes, they were watching their opportunity and intriguing and conspiring against Siraj.

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* *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 74.

† *Ibid*, p. 76.

It is said by English historians, for instance, by Mr. S. C. Hill, who writes :—

"Watson and Clive now thought it necessary to address the Nawab directly, and this they did on the 17th in separate letters of an unmistakably threatening character. It is certain he received these letters, but it is doubtful whether he made any reply." *

The copies of these letters are given below.

"Letter from Admiral Watson to the Nawab dated H. M. S 'Kent', at Fulta, in the River Hughly, 17 December, 1756.

"The King my master (whose name is revered among the monarchs of the world) sent me to these parts with a great fleet to protect the East India Company's trade, rights and privileges. The advantages resulting to the *Mogul's* dominions from the extensive commerce carried on by my master's subjects are too apparent to need enumerating. How great was my surprise therefore to be informed that you had marched against the said Company's factories with a large army, and forcibly expelled their servants, seized and plundered their effects, amounting to a large sum of money, and killed great members of the King my master's subjects.

"I am come down to Bengal to re-establish the said Company's servants in their former factories and houses, and hope to find you inclinable to do them that justice as restoring them and as to their ancient rights and immunities. As you must be sensible of the benefit of having the English

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. cxxix

settled in your country, I doubt not you will consent to make them a reasonable satisfaction for the losses and injuries they have sustained; and by that piece of justice put an amicable end to these troubles and secure the friendship of the King, my master, who is a lover of peace and delights in acts of equity. What can I say more?"

"Letter from Colonel Clive to the Nawab, dated 16-17 December, 1756.

"The occasion of my coming here you are already informed by letters from Nabob Sullabut Jung and Anwaroody Cawn and from Governor Pigot. You have likewise heard, I make no doubt, that I have brought with me a larger military force than has ever appeared in Bengal. You will judge it therefore prudent both for your own interest and the welfare of your country to consider maturely how injuriously the English settled in the provinces under your jurisdiction have been treated by your people, their houses and factories seized and detained, their effects to a large amount plundered, and *great numbers of the Company's servants and other inhabitants inhumanly killed.* These are acts of violence which I hope you do not approve of, and expect you will take care to have them severely punished. Your power and personal bravery are universally known; my reputation in war is likewise established by being ten years continually in the field upon the Coast, in which time my undertakings have always been attended (by the blessing of Providence) with success; and I trust in God, that I shall be as fortunate in these parts. Should necessity oblige me to proceed to those extremities one of us must [be] overcome, we cannot both be victorious and I leave you to reflect how

uncertain the fortune of war is and whether it is your interest to risk so previous [? precious] a decision—to avoid it, you must make proper satisfaction for the losses sustained by the Company, their servants and *riots*, return their factories and invest them in their ancient privileges and immunities. By doing this piece of justice you will make me a sincere friend and get eternal honour to yourself and save the lives of many thousands who must otherwise be slaughtered on both sides without any fault of their own. What can I say more ?"

It will be noticed that there is no mention made in these letters of the Black Hole Tragedy.

It is not probable that Clive would have requested Manik Chand to send his letter to the Nawab or opened negotiations with him on the subject, had he addressed the letter of the 17th December directly to the Nawab. But it is more than probable that Clive and his brother officers must have conspired and intrigued with Manik Chand and tempted him to compromise the position of the Nawab. It is on this hypothesis only that the action at Budge Budge can be properly explained. Regarding this fight, Mr. S. C. Hill writes :—

"It was not until the 26th that the pilots reported that the state of the river was favorable for the ships, and even then, probably owing to the late arrival of the *Salisbury*, the advance did not begin until the 27th. The Sepoys were

ordered to march overland,.....On the 28th the sepoys reached Mayapur, where they were joined by the Company's troops, and on the 29th arrived at Budge Budge. Here the troops halted near the river-bank in a position where they could be seen from the mast heads of the ships, but could not see the Fort, as they were themselves surrounded by bushes. Clive had been absolutely unable to obtain any trustworthy intelligence, and without his knowing it the enemy were encamped within two miles of him. The greater part of his little army was thrown out in different directions, when the small force under his immediate command—about 260 Europeans—was suddenly attacked by a body of 2,000 men, whom Manik Chand had brought down. The fighting lasted for half an hour, the enemy,.....were driven off, and the arrival of the king's troops, who had been landed for the attack of the Fort of Budge Budge and had heard the firing, made Clive's position safe.....

"The skirmish at Budge Budge took place about mid-day. The feet, the *Tyger* leading, had arrived before the Fort shortly before 8 A. M. when the fort opened fire upon her. *The fact that the enemy commenced hostilities was duly noted later by the Council and Colonel in their letters to the Nawab and his subjects as a justification for the action of the British.* The enemy were quickly driven from their guns, and the king's troops landed to attack the Fort."*

The argument clothed in the passage italicised in the above extract would not have been advanc-

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. CXXIX-CXXX.

ed by any body who is either not a fool or a knave. But it served the purpose of the English to parade that as a grievance and a cause of action against the Nawab.

But that Manick Chand was a traitor and was in collusion with the English become almost self-evident facts when we find him deserting the Fort and running away after merely receiving a bullet through his turban. It is said that he ran straight to Murshidabad. To say that he was a coward is no explanation of his desertion and precipitate flight. The fort of Budge Budge was a very strong one. Regarding it in a letter to John Cleveland Esq, dated H. M. S. 'Kent', off Calcutta, in the River Hooghly, 31 January, 1757, Admiral Watson wrote :—

"This Fort was extremely well situated for defence, and had the advantage of a wet ditch round it."*

To run away from such a strong fort after nearly half an hour's fight, does not suggest cowardice but treachery and previous understanding with the English on the part of Manick Chand. The following extract from Revd. Long's Selections from the Government Records also tends to confirm our view :

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p.

"The Government (in 1763) agreed to entertain on the Company's pay the son of the deceased Manick Chand, *who was useful to them in various ways during the preceding 30 years*, though he led the Nawab's troops against the English at the battle of Budge-Budge."

The fort at Budge Budge was taken on the night of the 29th December, 1756. Captain (afterwards sir Eyre) Coote thus described its capture in his journal:

"While I was on board, a sailor that was drunk stole away to the fort gate, and fired his pistol and cried out the place was his, upon which the King's, who were next the gate, entered the fort without any opposition; thus the place was taken without the least honour to any one; we found the fort very strong, with a wet ditch all round it, and I had the honor to command it that night."

Of course, the "heathen" inmates of the fort were mostly killed by the "Christians." It is probable that some found means of escape.

Captain Coote made the following entries regarding the progress of the troops under the command of Clive and Watson:

"*December 30th.* Re-embarked the troops, the *seapoys* marched by land.

"*December 31st.* The Fleet proceeded up the river.

"1757, *Jan. 1st.* Came in sight of Tannah Fort, which the enemy had evacuated.

"*Jan. 2nd.* Colonel Clive landed with the Company's

troops and the *Kent* and *Tyger* proceeded to Calcutta. About 9 o'clock the Fort fired smartly on the *Tyger*; she was half an hour before she could get a gun to bear; as soon as we could get our guns to bear from the *Kent* and *Tyger*, we ply'd so warmly that they left before 12 o'clock. The Admiral ordered me on shore to hoist the English colours and take the command of the Fort for His Majesty.*

Thus Calcutta was very easily re-captured by the Company's servants, for its governor Manik Chand had already fled away.†

It is not necessary to refer in detail to the unseemly quarrel that took place between Clive and Watson for precedence. Both were actuated by sordid greed and desirous of getting for himself the lion's share of the treasure and other worldly goods which they expected inside the fort at Calcutta. But they were disappointed, for they

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* *Ibid*, Vol, III, p. 41.

† Mr. S. C. Hill writes that Manik Chand "made no stand at Calcutta, but hastily betook himself to Hugli whence he sent word to the Nawab at Murshidabad that the British he had now to deal with were a very different kind of men from those whom he had defeated at Calcutta." Vol. I, p. CXXXVII.

This is a clear indication of treachery on the part of Manik Chand.

did not find much worth looting inside. It is greatly to the credit of the Nawab's men that they had not appropriated to themselves the merchandises belonging to the Company. Thus wrote Orme (II. 126) :—

"The greatest part of the merchandizes belonging to the Company, which were in the Fort when taken, were found remaining without detriment."

Neither the Moslems nor the "heathens" of India were vandals or "birds of prey" like the Christians of the West, and it is due to this fact that they did not touch any thing belonging to the Christian merchants.

After the capture of the fort, it was handed over to Mr. Drake and the Council on the 3rd January, 1757.

The Treaty of Alinagar.

Siraj-ud-daula did not bear any malice towards the English. He was ready and willing to grant them the same privileges on which they had traded before. But the English having regained possession of Calcutta thought they were in a position to dictate their own terms to the Nawab and therefore treated him with deliberate contempt and insult. They conspired and intrigued against the Nawab. To bring good will and peace

on this earth was foreign to these Christians, who, to make their power felt, discussed two plans of operations.

"One was to send a party of sailors by river to Dacca, apparently to seize that town, and possibly to set up one of the sons of Sarfarâz Khân, who were prisoners there, as a rival to Sirâj-ud-dowla; the other, easier and more practicable, was to send a small expedition to Hugli and burn the granaries and stores which the Nawab had ordered to be collected near that City."*

The Christian natives of England were descended from the old sea-king robbers. Piracy was their hereditary occupation. The well-known English politician Sir Charles Dilke writing in the early seventies of the nineteenth century was forced to say that listening to the conversation at mess-tables in India they remembered their descent from sea-king robbers; centuries of education had not purified their blood.

It is small wonder that Clive and his countrymen could not resist the temptation of plundering Hugli, which lay undefended. So Hugli was attacked and many of its inhabitants were slaughtered in cold blood and all their earthly belongings looted by the English.

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* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CXXXVIII.

The Hughly fort was very easily captured and so it would be thought that the object of the expedition was accomplished. But the English did not think so.

"The 11th January [1757] was spent in plundering the houses round the Fort,....." From this time on to the 18th the troops were occupied in pillaging the native houses, even entering some within the Dutch Settlement on the plea that they belonged to subjects of the Nawab, or that property belonging to his subjects or plunder from Calcutta were concealed in them."*

When the news of this wanton outrage reached the ears of the Nawab, he, with great self-control and composure, which was peculiarly oriental in character, wrote the following letter (the moderation of which is much to be commended) to Admiral Watson.

"You have taken and plundered *Hughley*, and made a war upon my subjects : these are not acts becoming merchants ! I have, therefore, left Mursidabad, and have arrived near Hughley ; I am likewise crossing the river with my army, part of which is advanced towards your camp. Nevertheless, if you have a mind to have the Company's business settled upon its ancient footing, and to give a currency to their trade, send a person of consequence to me, who can make your demands, and treat with me upon this

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CXL.

affair. I shall not scruple to grant a Perwannah for the restitution of all the Company's factories, and permit them to trade in my country upon the same terms as formerly. If the English, who are settled in these provinces, will behave like merchants, obey my orders, and give me no offence, you may depend upon it I will take their loss into consideration and adjust matters to their satisfaction.

"You know how difficult it is to prevent soldiers from plundering in war; therefore, if you will, on your part, relinquish something of the damages you have sustained by being pillaged by my army, I will endeavour to give you satisfaction even in that particular, in order to gain your friendship, and preserve a good understanding for the future with your nation.

"You are a Christian, and know how much preferable it is to accommodate a dispute, than to keep it alive; but if you are determined to sacrifice the interest of your Company and the good of private merchants to your inclination for war, it is no fault of mine; to prevent the fatal consequence of such a ruinous war, I write this letter."§ (Ive's Voyages, p. 109).

Siraj wrote like a philosopher and he cannot be sufficiently praised for his statesmanlike views and strong desire for living at peace with the English.

But patching up a friendship with the English was something like building a house on fleeting sand. It was very slippery and uncertain. Perhaps Siraj had some inkling that Clive and the

other British officers had been intriguing with his own courtiers against him. Writes Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"Clive had written to many of the chief persons of the Court asking for assistance, but up till this time (i. e., capture and sack of Hughli) few had thought it necessary to reply."*

So by the showing of English writers themselves it is evident that the intrigue of Clive and his countrymen with the Nawab's courtiers was not unsuccessful. Under these circumstances, Siraj thought it was impossible for him to successfully wage war against the English. He knew how the latter had raised traitors in his camp who betrayed to them the forts at Budge Budge and Calcutta. With all these facts before him, he could not think of again crossing swords with the English. As a statesman he had to deal with the circumstances which were then present. And under those circumstances to try to gain the friendship of the English instead of making them his enemies was the only alternative left to Siraj. The English seeing the anxiety of the Nawab to make friendship with them made the following proposals as the indispensable conditions of their alliance with him :—

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CXLI (footnote).

"(1.) That the British should receive complete reparation for all their losses.

"(2.) That the Company should be allowed the full exercise of all its privileges in Bengal.

"(3.) That the British should have the right to fortify their settlements as they pleased.

"(4.) That the Company should have a Mint at Calcutta."

Excepting the last one, which it was not in the power of the Nawab to grant,—for it was only the Delhi Emperor who could do so—the Nawab was willing to grant the other three proposals. But the English went on increasing their demands and asking more and more on each new occasion. Thus when the Nawab asked them to send their envoys to his *Durbar*, Messrs. Amyat and Hastings, who were deputed, not only made those demands which have been already mentioned above, but also the following three additional ones, *viz* :—

"(1.) That the Nawab should not demand or molest any of the merchants or inhabitants of Calcutta;

"(2.) That the *dastak* of the British should protect all their boats and goods passing through the country;

"(3.) That articles to the above effect should be signed and sealed by the Nawab and his Ministers."

The Nawab, who had left Murshidabad with his army, reached Calcutta on the 4th February,

1757. Here, he was accommodated in the garden house of Amir Chand. Clive and his colleagues, meaning treachery to the Nawab, determined to despatch Messrs. Walsh and Scrafton to him with the Select Committee's proposals. Of course, these deputies were sent to spy out the Nawab's camp. Mr. Jean Law wrote :—

"To deceive him (Siraj) more completely and examine the position of his camp the English sent deputies the day before the attack they meditated. These deputies were ordered to propose an accommodation, but the very conditions must have shown the Nawab this was only a ruse on the part of his enemy."*

The deputies did what they had been directed to do. Then they retired to their tents, and, pretending to go to sleep, they put out their lights and made their escape in the darkness. The English were, of course, ready to attack the Nawab. So when their two spies joined them, thetroops under Clive and other cofficers attacked the Nawab's camp early the next morning. M. Jean Law wrote :—

"The next day, the 5th January, at 4 or 5 A. M., in a thick fog, the English, commanded by Colonel Clive, at-

* *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 182. It is also probable that Raja Naba Krishna also played the part of a spy and kept the English informed of the movements and doings of the Nawab.

tacked the Nawab's camp and fell precisely upon the tent in which the deputies had seen him the evening before. (I heard this from several Moorish officers who were in the Nawab's army.) Luckily for him he was not there. One of his *diwans* who suspected the deputation had advised him to pass the night in a tent further off. At first the English drove the Moors before them like a flock of sheep and killed 1,200 to 1,500 men, *sepoys* and camp-sutlers, 600 horses at their pickets and a number of draught oxen. The Nawab was terrified, fled as fast as he could and did not stop till he was sixteen miles above Calcutta. However, after the first fire some officers rallied their men and made a stand, amongst others a body of Persian cavalry who charged with great courage. This firmness joined to the fact that the day was clearing determined Colonel Clive to withdraw. The English had more than 200 men, black and white, killed or wounded in this action, and in the retreat lost two field-pieces the carriages of which had broken down."

The conduct of the English was highly reprehensible. They were negotiating for peace with the Nawab, who did not therefore anticipate any foul treachery on their part. So the attack on the Nawab's camp cannot be justified. As said before, the English had raised traitors in his camp. It was due to this fact, more than to anything else, that Siraj-ud-daula could not gain any advantage over them. Although Mr. Jean Law says that he ran away from the field of

battle, it is doubtful if he really did so. For, another compatriot of Law's, M. Renault, in a letter to the Marquis Dupleix, dated Chandernagore, 4th September, 1757, wrote :—

"In the meantime the English, who had for some days been face to face with the Nawab, attacked his camp at dawn. Though they sent all their soldiers, and added the crews of all their ships, and managed to surprise the Moors, they got less advantage than they expected from this combat. After having gained some ground on the enemy they could not keep it against Siraj-ud-daula, who had rallied a part of his army: they retreated in disorder and only too fortunate in being able to put themselves under the protection of the guns of their Fort, having lost in this action nearly two hundred men."*

But the unfortunate Nawab had not only to contend with his enemies, but also with the traitors in his camp whom they had raised. On the authority of Scrafton, Mr. S. C. Hill wrote of Siraj-ud-daula :

"On his march down he had found many of his soldiers, and even some of his officers, unwilling to follow him." (Ibid, Vol. I, p. CXLVII).

Even so early as the beginning of 1757, it would seem from the following, that the English were intriguing and conspiring with Meer Jaffer against

* *Ibid*, Vol. III, p, 246.

Siraj. Scrafton, in his Reflections, p. 66, wrote that Siraj-uddaula

"discovered some appearance of disaffection in some of his principal officers, particularly in Meer Jaffer, whose conduct in this affair had been very mysterious."

So the Nawab was obliged to accede to the proposals of the English. M. Renault proceeded to write, in the letter from which an extract has already been given above, that

"the Ministers of the Nawab, almost all of whom were partisans of the English, desiring only to make peace, profitted by this occasion to bring the Nawab to it and he, forced by the mutinous disposition of his generals,.....found himself, contrary to his own wishes, obliged to consent and even to submit to extremely hard conditions."*

Under such circumstances, the Nawab concluded the Treaty known as the Treaty of Alinagar with the English on the 9th February, 1756. The terms of the Treaty were as follows :—

"1. All privileges granted by the Emperor of Delhi to the British to be confirmed.

"2. All goods under the British *dastak* to pass free throughout Bengal, Bahar and Orissa.

"3. The Company's Factories and all goods and effects belonging to the Company, its servants or tenants, which had been taken by the Nawab to be restored; a sum of

* *Ibid*, Vol. III, pp. 246-247.

money to be paid for what had been plundered or pillaged by the Nawab's people.

"4. Calcutta to be fortified as the British thought proper.

"5. The British to have the right to coin *siccas*.

"6. The Treaty to be ratified by the Nawab and his chief officers and ministers.

"7. Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive to promise on behalf of the English nation and Company to live on good terms with the Nawab so long as the latter observed the Treaty."

Such were the conditions of the Treaty forced on the Nawab. But the English, not satisfied with the hard terms imposed on the Nawab, made further demands on him. Writes Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"No sooner was the Treaty signed than the Select Committee began to regret that they had allowed the Nawab such easy terms, and asked Clive to call a Council of War to consider whether the British were not strong enough to force him to grant better ones. The Council replied that, all circumstances considered, it was not advisable to press the Nawab further, and so, fortunately for the credit of the British, the Committee determined not to break the Treaty which it had only just signed."*

Of course, the British, like the wolf in the fable, were on the look-out for the pretext of a

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CXLIX.

muddied stream to devour the Nawab. And how they managed it would be mentioned further on. Yet English writers are audacious enough to give credit to their own co-religionists and compatriots for being "determined not to break the Treaty."

Capture of Chandernagore

It has been already mentioned that hardly the ink on the Treaty which the British had concluded with Siraj was dry when they regretted to have made such a treaty at all. So they were trying all means that lay in their power to break it. But with that consummate hypocrisy of which the co-religionists and compatriots of Clive were masters, they tried to make the Moslem prince appear as the delinquent party. They discovered some loopholes in the Treaty which they strained in their favour. Mr. S. C. Hill, speaking of the Treaty, writes that

"The manner of the Nawab's acceptance is neither clear nor satisfactory—*e. g.*, in reference to the demand for restitution for the losses of the British the Nawab only promised to restore or pay for such property as had been entered in his own books, thus taking no account of the property that had been plundered by his soldiers or which had been secreted by his officers. This was made the subject of further demands.

"In addition to this no notice was taken in the Treaty of

the losses of the private sufferers, but the Nawab verbally promised a sum of *3 lakhs* for this purpose, and also, it seems, a particular sum to recoup Colonel Clive and Major Killpatrick for their personal losses."*

Thus it will be seen that the British were not satisfied with the Treaty. But they congratulated themselves upon inducing the Nawab to agree to an English envoy being sent to Murshidabad. This was the cause of all the troubles and evils that befell Siraj-ud-daula. General Gordon, who was killed at Khartoum by the Mahdi and his followers, gave the following certificate to the diplomatists of his race and creed :

"I must say", wrote General Gordon, "I hate our diplomatists. I think with few exceptions they are arrant humbugs, and I expect they know it. I include the Colvin class." (General Gordon's Journal, p. 158).

Again, in another place of his journal, he wrote :—

"We are an honest nation, but diplomatists are conies, and not officially honest." (P. 15).

Of course, these European envoys are highly proficient in the art of intrigues and like white ants by travelling under ground destroy those kingdoms, states and principalities to which they

* *Ibid*, vol. I, p. CXLIX.

get an access. So, had Siraj-ud-daula been wise in his generation, he would have strongly declined the honor of receiving a British envoy at his court.

Mr. Watts was selected as an envoy to represent the English at the Court of the Nawab. His chief recommendations were that he was very well versed in the country language, and in its politics and customs.* He was instructed to intrigue and conspire against the Nawab. The Council of War which on the 12th February, 1757—after the ratification of the Treaty of Alinagar—decided not to renew hostilities but to gain their objects by diplomacy, suggested the appointment of Mr. Watts as their envoy. In their letter to the Select Committee, dated Fort William, 12th February, 1757, Messrs. Clive, Killpatrick, etc., wrote that they were

"of opinion other articles may be asked, not demanded and that a gentleman deputed to the Nabob who understands the language and the customs of the country may not only be a means of getting them granted but likewise be of great use in many other matters, both public and private, which cannot be so properly done in writing."

To Mr. Watts the Select Committee in their letter dated 16th February, 1757, wrote that

* Scrafton's *Reflections*, p. 68.

"as many things have been omitted in this treaty, and as some require explaining to prevent future causes of disputes and evasions, we are to direct you will strenuously apply to the Nabob upon the following heads :

"First, you must demand that the *phirmand, husbul hookums* and other royal grants be enrolled in the *Mogul's* Books.....that strict obedience be publickly ordered to the contents thereof, that the Nabob do send *perwannahs* to the zemindars of the villages granted to the Company by the royal *perwannahs* to deliver those towns to the English.....

"Secondly. You must get the article of the Mint explained in fuller terms and extend the liberty of coining to all bullion and gold imported into Calcultta by the English.

"Thirdly. As the Nabob has consented to our *dustucks* passing in the country without being liable to any tax, fee or imposition from the *chokeys*, we doubt not he will permit us to punish the offenders of this article ourselves without a tedious complaint at the Durbar.....

"Fourthly. We think the article of restitution is by the Nabob worded in a very loose manner. On your arrival therefore at Muxadavad, you must desire an exact account of all moneys, goods and effects entered in the Nabob's *sircarry*. But as the Nabob must be sensible the Company's servants and private inhabitants have lost an immense sum in money and goods, of which no account has been given in his Books, it is but reasonable and just some restitution should be made them.....

"Fifthly. Should private restitution be refused, you must press the Nabob to take upon himself the discharge

of all debts due from the English to his subjects or to the natives in general, as his violence and the pillage of his people have incapacitated us from paying those debts.

"Sixthly. We think it would not be improper to mention, that the Courts of Justice established by His Majesty's Charter should be allowed of, and privilege given us to try, condemn and execute all natives residing within our bounds if found guilty of capital crimes.

"Seventhly. Being determined to employ Europeans in future at the *Durbar* the Nabob must promise them a civil reception whenever the Governor and Council think it proper to depute any to attend him ;.....we expect in future to be liable to no payment of money or presents on making visits.

"Eighthly. Could we obtain a promise from the Nabob that he will not erect any fortifications below Calcutta within a mile of the river, it would be very useful but there is no necessity to demand this concession.

"Ninthly. As it is probable the Honourable Company may judge it proper to order the re-establishing of their factory at Patna, we desire you will apply for liberty to repossess it whenever we think proper, without any expense of presents or money to the *Durbar*,...

Lastly. That you desire positive orders be sent to all his officers and people to return all Books, Papers and Accounts that are in their possession belonging to the English."

Amir Chand accompanied Mr. Watts as his agent and adviser.

It will be observed from the instructions given to Mr. Watts that the English wanted to break the Treaty they had ratified with the Nawab, because their demands were so extraordinary and extravagant and that these not being included in the original Treaty, no self-respecting Prince could have granted them But the English were bent upon mischief and wanted to exasperate the Nawab and thus provoke him to hostilities.

Mr. S. C. Hill writes :

"The errand Mr. Watts had been sent upon was a very difficult one ; he had not merely to obtain the fulfilment of the Treaty, but to have it interpreted in the most generous manner possible, and also to contrive the Nawab's acceptance of several other articles which, if they had been touched on at all, were not included in the actual Treaty."*

Mr. Watts knew that it was impossible for him to make the Nawab agree to grant those demands which the English had made upon him. Therefore he chose the least honourable course, *viz.*, that of intriguing and conspiring against the Nawab and also committing mischief in various other ways. In his "Memoirs of the Revolution," Mr. Watts has written that at Murshidabad nothing could be done except

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CLX.

"by opposing corruption to corruption, making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and getting upon even grounds with those with whom we were obliged to contend."

Mr. H. C. Hill, after making the above extract from Mr. Watt's Memoirs, adds :

"Mr. Watts seems to have had no hesitation in playing the game in the oriental style."*

Of course Mr. Watts like his other compatriots of those days in India was altogether devoid of all sense of honor and honesty and he played the game not in oriental but quite in occidental style. The orientals whom he imposed upon were simple-minded enough not to see through the designs of the occidental Christians.

Mr. Watts had to surrender the factory at Cossimbazar and was made a prisoner by Siraj ud daula. It is an English saying that vengeance sleeps long but it never dies. Mr. Watts, imagining himself to have been ill used by Siraj-ud-daula, was trying his utmost to ruin him. It was he who suggested to the Select Committee, Fort William, to attack the French without obtaining the permission of the Nawab. In his letter to the Select Committee, dated 25th February, 1756, he wrote :—

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CLX.

"If we attack and take Chandernagore, every part of our agreement will be fulfilled and more indulgences granted us. If we are unsuccessful, we shall get nothing and if a neutrality is concluded with the French no chicanery, artifice, or cunning will be left untried to delay putting us in possession of what the Nabob has assented to. The Nabob marches to Patna in a few days, when we shall be left to demand satisfaction of his *duan, Moinloll*, a most rapacious, avaritious Minister, in treating with whom we shall meet with nothing but obstacles and difficulties.....*We shall never be able to get a public order or leave to attack the French.*"*

The English had exerted their utmost to get inserted in the Treaty a clause which would bind the Nawab to attack and crush the French in their territory. But this the Nawab refused to do. Writes Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"There was, however, one matter of which the British could not obtain a satisfactory settlement. Clive had proposed to the Nawab's envoys an alliance against, and an immediate attack upon, the French. To this the Nawab would not agree."†

The French like the English were trading in the Nawab's dominions and had not given him any trouble which the latter had done. So the proposal to attack them which the

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 256.

† *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CXLIX.

English made to him appeared to the Nawab too horrid to entertain, and so he would not agree to it.

It is true that in his private letters to Admiral Watson, dated 9th Feb. 1757, the Nawab wrote :—

"As long as I have life I shall esteem your enemies as enemies to me, and will assist you to the utmost of my power whenever you may require it."

He wrote to Colonel Clive to the same effect on the 11th Feb. 1757.

Says Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"These letters the British held to be as binding upon the Nawab as the Treaty itself, and his refusal to carry out his private promises they considered to be a breach of the Treaty."*

Of course, none but a fool or a knave would advance an argument like the above as an indictment against the Nawab. He did not violate any treaty or even any promise privately made. He had distinctly made the English understand that he would not attack the French when they made that proposal to him and to have it inserted as a clause in the Treaty itself. Besides, he did not consider the French *in Bengal* as enemies of the English, for within his domi-

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CXLIX.

nions, they had not done any harm to the latter. As sovereign of Bengal, it was he who had to decide who were the friends or enemies of any particular community.

After the ratification of the Treaty of Alinagar Siraj left Calcutta for his capital impressed with the belief that he would not any longer have any cause for hostilities with any Christian nation and that peace and prosperity would reign in his dominions. But this proposal of the English to attack and crush the French soon undeceived him. He had not yet reached his capital when he received the intelligence of the meditated attack of the English on the French. So he lost no time in acquainting the English with his views on the subject. He wrote to Admiral Watson on the 19th February, 1757:—

"To put an end to the hostilities in my country and dominions, I consented and agreed to the treaty of peace with the *English*, that trade and commerce might be carried on as formerly; to which treaty you have agreed, and a firm accommodation between us is settled and established; you have likewise sent me an agreement, under your own hand and seal, not to disturb the tranquility of my country; but it now appears that you have a design to besiege the *French* factory near Hoogley, and to commence hostilities against that nation. *This is contrary to all rule and custom, that*

you should bring your animosities and differences into my country; for it has never been known since the days of *Timur*, that the Europeans made war upon one another within the King's dominions. If you are determined to besiege the *French* factories, I shall be necessitated in honor and duty to my king, to assist them with my troops. You seem inclined to break the treaty so lately concluded between us; formerly the *Mahrattas* infested these dominions, and for many years harassed the country with war, but when the dispute was accommodated, and a treaty of peace with that people concluded, they never broke, nor will they ever deviate from, the terms of the said treaty. It is a wrong and wicked practice, to break through and pay no regard to treaties made in the most solemn manner; you are certainly bound to abide by your part of the treaty strictly, and never to attempt or be the occasion of any troubles or disturbances in future within the provinces under my jurisdiction. I will on my part observe most punctually what I have promised and consented to.

"I will maintain and preserve on my part the treaty of peace I have made with the English, which with the permission of God I hope will continue for ever. You may have heard, that for seven years, we had constant wars with the Mahrattas, but when a treaty of peace was concluded with them, they strictly observed the terms, and never deviated from them. It is but just and reasonable that your nation should pay regard to the late treaty, and commit no hostilities in my country, nor disturb its tranquility with [any differences,

that may subsist between you and other European powers."*

The above letter most clearly and in no equivocal or diplomatic language expressed the views of Siraj-ud-daula with regard to the proposed expedition of the English against the French. He pointed out to them that they intended to break the treaty which they had recently concluded with him. He asked them to abide by the terms of the Treaty. He wondered how a nation which called itself "Christian", should lack in all those virtues which were possessed by the Mahrattas and other "heathens" of India. He wrote again on the following day :—

"The letter I wrote to you yesterday, I imagine you have received; since which I have been informed by the *French Vakeel* that five or six additional ships of war have arrived in the river, and that more are expected. He represents likewise, that you design commencing hostilities against me and my subjects again, as soon as the rains are over. This is not acting agreeable to the character of a true soldier, and a man of honour, who never violated their words. If you are sincere in the treaty concluded with me, send your ships of war out of the river, and abide steadfastly by your agreement; I will not fail in the observance of the treaty on my part. Is it becoming or honest to begin

* Ive's *Voyages*, pp. 119–120.

a war, after concluding the peace so lately and solemnly? The *Maharathas* are bound by no *gospel*, yet they are strict observers of treaties. It will therefore be matter of great astonishment, and hard to be believed, if you, who are enlightened with the *gospel*, should not remain firm, and preserve the treaty you have ratified in the presence of *God* and *Jesus Christ*."

Of course, the perfidious Christian admiral was furious with rage, because the conspiracy which he and his compatriots were hatching against Siraj was suspected by the Nawab. So the Admiral wrote to the Moslem Prince in the tone of injured innocence. In his letter of the 25th of February, 1757, to the Nawab, Admiral Watson wrote :—

"Your letter of the 20th instant I received two days ago, but being just in the height of my dispatches for *England* I was not able to answer it till now. I know not how to express to you my astonishment, at finding myself taxed with having a design to break the peace, on so slight a foundation as a base fellow's having dared to tell you so, without any one action of mine being produced to support so extravagant and impudent an accusation, which has not the least shadow of probability to render it credible. You tell me, 'It is unworthy the character of a *soldier*, and man of *honour*, to violate their words!' In what single instance, since my being here, have I acted so unworthily as to make you think me capable of violating mine? Yourself can answer for me, *in none*. My dealing with you hath always been full of that frankness and sincerity for which

my countrymen are remarkable throughout the known world. From you sir, I expect justice on that base man, who has dared falsely to accuse me, and to impose upon you. In the meantime, I have complained to the *French* of their *Vackeel's* behaviour; who have promised me to write to you their knowledge of the falsity of his accusation. You may rest assured, that I will always religiously observe the peace; and I beg you to believe, that people who raise reports to the contrary, can only do it to create jealousies, which they hope will break the friendship they are sorry to see between us."

Well, the above letter, as was to be expected from a perfidious Britisher trained in occidental diplomacy in the school of Macchievalli and Talleyrand, was full of hypocrisy, insincerity and falsehood. Watson did not, for he could not, answer the questions put to him in the straightforward manner by Siraj. Was it true or was it not, that five or six additional ships of war had arrived in the river? Watson's letter did not remove from the mind of the Nawab the suspicions he entertained of the conduct of the English towards him. According to the terms of the Treaty the latter were to assist him in his hour of necessity with men and money. To deprive them of their troops and thus prevent them from committing any hostilities in his dominions, he asked them to lend him their troops, with which

he proposed to march towards Patna to meet the Delhi Emperor's forces, which, it was rumoured, had been despatched against him. He wrote to Watson :—

"The letter you wrote me about the *French* affair, I have received and perused. You may depend [upon] it, that I neither have nor will assist the *French*. If they begin any troubles or commit any hostilities in my territories, I will oppose them with my whole force, and punish them very severely. I was informed you designed to attack *Chandernagore*, which made me write you what I thought was reasonable and just upon that head. The forces I sent down were to guard and protect the King's subjects, and not to assist the *French*. If the purport of my letter has been the occasion of your desisting from the attack of *Chandernagore*, it gives me great satisfaction. I have written the *French* likewise what I thought was proper, in order to make them apply for a neutrality ; I suppose they will act conformably. I will send a person of consideration to bring me the treaty you may conclude with them, and will order it to be registered in my books. Assure yourself that I have no other design or inclination than to live upon terms of good understanding and friendship with the *English*. By the grace of God, I never intend to do any thing that you will not esteem just ; this rely upon, and do not expect a failure. Do you likewise remain fixed to your treaty and word, and give no credit to the reports of people of no consideration or figure. If you have anything to write about, please to address me, and no body else ; I will always send a fair and unreserved answer.

"The van of the King of Dehli's army is advancing towards these provinces; upon this intelligence I design marching towards Patna to meet them. If at this critical juncture you will be my friend, and send me assistance I will pay your forces a lack of rupees monthly, while they remain with me. Send me an immediate answer."

This last request of the Nawab involved him in his ruin, for it gave the English a pretext to move their troops from Calcutta as if to assist him but in reality with the intentions of reducing the French settlement at Chandernagore first and then to attack him.

Mr. Watts, the envoy of the English at Murshidabad, in order to be avenged on Siraj-ud-daula, was writing to Calcutta to incite his compatriots against the Nawab and not to make peace with the French. Writes Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"On the 25th February Watts wrote to Calcutta that it was impossible to rely upon the Nawab, and that it would be wise to attack Chandernagore without delay, as influenced by Manik Chand and Coja Wajid, the Nawab had again ordered Mir Jafar to march."*

The Christian Admiral Watson, thinking that Siraj-ud-daula being threatened with the invasion of his dominions by the Mogul Emperor's troops

* *Bengal Records*, 1756-1757, Vol. I, CLXI.

must be in perplexity and in a fix, considered that moment to be most favorable to play on the fears of the Nawab and to gain his nefarious ends. He addressed the Nawab the following letter, which was certainly not worded very courteously :

"I answered your letter of the 20th of last month some days past ; I suppose you have ere now received it, and are thereby fully convinced of the falsehood of the *French Vakeel's* informations of my intention to break the peace. If you still want further proofs of the sincerity with which I made it, and the desire I have to preserve it, you will find them in my *patience ;* which has not only suffered your part of the treaty to be thus long unexecuted, but has even borne with your assisting my enemies the *French* with men and money; contrary to your faith pledged to me in the most solemn manner, 'that my enemies should be yours'.

"*Is it thus that soldiers and men of honour never violate their words ?*" But it is time now to speak *plain* : if you are really desirous of preserving your country in peace, and your subjects from misery and ruin ; in *ten days* from the date of this, fulfill your part of the treaty in *every article*, that I may not have the least cause of complaint ; otherwise remember, you must answer for the consequences ; and as I have always acted the open, unreserved part in all my dealings with you ; I now acquaint you, that the remainder of the troops, which should have been here long since (and which I hear the Colonel told you he expected) will be at *Calcutta* in a few days ; that in a few days more I shall dispatch a vessel for more ships and more troops ; and that I will kindle such a flame in your country, as all the water

in the *Ganges* shall not be able to extinguish. Farewell: remember that he promises you this, who never yet broke his word with you, or with any man whatsoever."*

The Christian admiral showed himself in his true colors. So the treaty he had signed and his letters to the Nawab in which the admiral assured him "in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ" that he would observe peace in his country were mere cant and hypocrisy and meant to gain time. In the original treaty there was no time limit fixed during which the articles of the treaty were to be executed. So now for the Christian admiral to ask the Nawab to give effect to the terms of the Treaty within ten days was merely a pretext for commencing hostilities. Siraj-ud-daula, with the characteristic courtesy of a born gentleman and an Oriental, answered the Christian admiral as follows:—

"I have already answered the letter you wrote me some days ago. Be so good as to consider the purport of what I wrote, (concerning the King of *Delhi*), and send me a speedy reply. I am fixed and determined to abide by the terms of the treaty we have concluded, but have been obliged to defer the execution of the articles on account of the *Hooly*, during which holidays my Banians and ministers do not attend the *Durbar*. As soon as that is over, I will strictly

* Ive's *Voyages*, p. 124.

comply with every thing I have signed. You are sensible that there is no avoiding this delay, and I flatter myself it will not be thought much of. It is not my custom to break any treaty I make, therefore be satisfied that I will not endeavour to evade that which I have made with the *English*. I rely on your friendship and bravery in giving me the assistance I asked against the van of the *Pytan* army who are advancing this way, and that you will oblige me with a compliance to the request I made in my last letter. What shall I say more ?

"I beg you will be sensible of my sincerity. I promise you in the most faithful manner, that I will never break or infringe my part of the treaty I have made with your nation.

"This you may be sure of, that if any person or persons attempt to quarrel with you, or become your enemies, I have sworn before God that I will assist you. I have never given the *French* a single *cowry*, and what forces of mine are at *Houghley*, were sent to *Nundcomar* the *Fougedar* of that place : the *French* will never dare to quarrel with you ; and I persuade myself that you will not, contrary to ancient custom, commit any hostilities within the *Ganges*, or in the provinces of which I am *Soubadar*".*

Siraj wrote as befitted a prince. The cause of the delay in the execution of the terms of the Treaty was very reasonable. It is a fact well known all over the world, how delays occur in the execution of even the decree of a law court.

* Ive's *Voyages*, pp. 124 and 125.

There is very often delay also in the execution of the terms of treaties between civilized and Christian powers. But no nation threaten their late enemy within a month of the ratification of a treaty with hostilities. Moreover, Siraj had very good grounds for believing and he wrote about it so often to the Admiral that the English were not sincere in the observance of the treaty they had made with him. Under all these circumstances, no one except interested parties can blame him for not executing the terms of the Treaty imposed upon him by the adventurers of England.

Siraj had asked Watson to help him with troops to meet the Mogul Emperor's force sent against him. But the Admiral sent him an evasive reply. Wrote Watson :—

"You are going to *Patna*—you ask our assistance.—Can we with the least degree of prudence march with you, and leave our enemies behind us? You will be then too far off to support us, and we shall be unable to defend ourselves. Think what can be done in this situation. I see but one way. Let us take *Chandernagore*, and secure ourselves against any apprehensions from that quarter, and then we will assist you with every man in our power, and go with you even to *Dehli*, if you will."*

Watson's proposal did not commend itself to

* *Ibid*, p. 125.

Siraj. But the Admiral was determined on hostilities with the French and taking Chandernagore. The French had sent their deputies to Calcutta to get a treaty concluded to bind both the Christian nations to observe nentrality in Bengal. But it was Watson who was opposed to the Treaty.

"On the 4th March the Admiral declared himself dissatisfied, and refused to sign the treaty which had already been drawn up."*

Watson of course wanted to shed blood and to wage war both against the French and Siraj. In his letter to the Select Committee, Fort William, dated 3rd March, 1757, he wrote that

"the treaty ought not to take place till such time it is returned from Pondicherry ratified and confirmed and then upon your signifying to me my observing such a neutrality will be the properest step that ca. be taken for the advantage of the Company's affairs. I shall upon such a representation have no objection to giving you my promise thereto."†

How determined he was to go to war against the Nawab is clear from the following passages in the letter :—

"It is now three weeks since the Peace commenced in

* *Bengal Records*, Vol. I, p. CLXI.

† *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 268.

which many Articles were promised by him. Are they yet complied with? Give me leave to go a little further and ask when they will be complied with? I am afraid it is too difficult a question to be answered with any degree of exactness. Is it reasonable then to suppose if the Nabob should sign this guarantee and swear to the observance of it, that he will pay any more regard to that than he has done to the fulfilling the several Articles of the Peace? Or is it the policy of this country to place your confidence in the man who has not observed his word, though bound by the most solemn protestations?...I by no means think the Nabob ought to be addressed on this subject, till he has faithfully fulfilled all the Articles of the Peace, and that appears to me to be the most necessary business to be hastened, and I think as short time as possible should be given him for the completing it."*

Even Clive was alarmed at the attitude assumed by Watson. Addressing the members of the Select Committee on the 4th March, 1757, he said:—

"Do but reflect, gentlemen, what will be the opinion of the world of these our late proceedings. Did we not, in consequence of a letter received from the Governor and Council of Chandernagore making offers of a neutrality within the Ganges, in a manner accede to it by desiring they would send deputies, and that we would gladly come into such a neutrality with them; and have we not since their arrival drawn out Articles that were satisfactory to

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, pp. 269-270.

both parties, and agreed that each Article should be reciprocally signed, sealed and sworn to? What will the Nabob think! After promises made him on our side and after his consenting to guarantee this neutrality, he and all the world will certainly think that we are men of a trifling, insignificant disposition, or that *we are men without principles.* It is therefore incumbent on us to exculpate ourselves by declaring the real truth, that we are entirely ignorant of Mr. Watson's intentions to refuse the neutrality in the manner proposed and settled by us, and that we always thought him of a contrary opinion to what his letter declares. I am persuaded these must be the sentiments of gentlemen of the Committee, or they never would have gone such lengths as must expose them to the censure of all reasonable men."

But these reasonable words of Clive fell on deaf ears. Mr. S. C. Hill writes :—

"Clive was in despair, for the Admiral would not make a treaty with the French because Mr Renault had not power to sign one, and he would not attack Chandernagore because he had not obtained the Nawab's permission. Accordingly, on the 5th March he submitted a request to the Select Committee to allow him to return to Madras, as he considered it disgraceful to negotiate with the French if the negotiations were not intended to result in peace. When the Admiral refused to sign the Treaty the French immediately wrote to that effect to the Nawab, published a manifesto, and sent away their women and children to Chinsurah. The Nawab ordered a force under Rai Durlabh to march at once.

"On the 6th, as the Admiral was still immovable, it was formally debated in Council whether the British should attack Chandernagore or not, and Council decided to postpone all consideration of the Treaty until the Nawab had been appealed to again, as he had written to Clive explaining that the troops sent to Hugli were not to assist the French, but to keep order in the town, and to inform him that the Emperor's army was about to invade Bengal."*

But how to obtain the permission of the Nawab was the question with the English. Siraj had in unmistakeable terms expressed his detestation of their proposal to attack the French. So, if appealed to again, he was not likely to accede to their request.

What they could not gain by fair means they thought they would be able to achieve by occidental diplomacy. Mr. Watts was their envoy at Murshidabad and to him Clive turned for assistance. In a letter to Watts dated 25th February, 1757, Clive wrote :—

"How can what the Nabob expresses by word of mouth be confided in when he writes letters with his own *Chop* (seal), positively forbidding us to attack the French. If he answers my letter immediately and gives me but the least hint that he will not interfere, it is not too late : whilst his

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CLXI.

letters are extant against us and nothing but a few promises made us, and those too at second hand, what will the world think of our conduct should our design miscarry ?"*

Clive, afterwards a forgerer himself, suggested to Mr. Watts to do something of that nature to strengthen his hands and enable him to attack the French. The suggestion was not lost on Mr. Watts. The Nawab's secretary was in the pay of the Christian envoy.† He wrote on behalf of the Nawab a letter to Watson on the 10th March, which concluded as follows :—

"You have understanding and generosity ; if your enemy, with an upright heart, claims your protection, you will give him his life ; but then you must be well satisfied of the innocence of his intentions ; if not, whatever you think right that do".

Surgeon Ives, who quotes the whole letter in his "Voyages" (pp. 125-126), in a footnote on page 126 says that it is "from Mr. Watts's translation" ; and in another footnote to the same letter on page 125 says that "it was this paragraph that encouraged the Admiral and Colonel to proceed in their attack of *Chandernagore*."

The genuineness of this paragraph of the letter

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* *Ibid*, Vol. II, pp. 245-246.

† *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CLXII.

has been questioned by two Christians of two different nationalities, *viz.*, M. Jean Law and also Mr. Scrafton. The former wrote in his "Memoirs" how the English had corrupted the officers of the Nawab's army and Court.

"The English had on their side all the chief officers in the army of the Nawab, Mir Jafar Ali Khan, Khodadad Khan Latty, and a number of others whom their presents and the influence of the Seths attached to them, all the Ministers of the old Court disgraced by Siraj-ud-daula, nearly all the secretaries, the writers of the *Durbar* and even the eunuchs of the harem. What effect could they not expect from all these forces united and put in motion by a man so skilful as Mr. Watts."*

In a footnote to the above, M. Jean Law adds :—

"Witness the letter written to the English Admiral Watson, by which it is pretended the Nawab authorised him to undertake the siege of Chandernagore. The English Memoir confesses it was a surprise, and that the secretary must have been bribed to write in a way suitable to the views of Mr. Watts. The Nawab never read the letters which he ordered to be written ; besides, the Moors never sign their names. The envelope being closed and well fastened, the secretary asks the Nawab for his seal, and seals it in his presence. Often there is a counterfeit seal."

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* *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 191.

According to Mr. Scrafton also,* the English had to spend a good deal of money in bribing the Nawab's secretariat to get the above-mentioned letter written in a way suitable to their views.

But even assuming that the letter was written not only with the consent, but by the hand, of Siraj-ud-daula, it is worded in courteous terms and it certainly does not permit the English to exterminate the French. It should be remembered that the original letter in Persian is not in existence. The translation in English was done by Mr. Watts, who probably turned and twisted the words in the original in such a manner as to suit the interests of his countrymen. Reading the letter between the lines, no disinterested man can say that it gave permission to the English to attack the French. Even Mr. Scrafton, in his "Reflections," writes :—

"This letter may be very well understood, as a consent to our attacking the French, though it certainly was never meant as such."

But even before the receipt of the letter in

* "Partly by such arguments, and, taught by the French the power of money at the subah's court, partly by a handsome present of money to his first secretary, he (Mr. Watts) produced the following letter from him to Mr. Watson." "*Reflections*," p. 70.

which it was alleged by the English that the Nawab had given his consent to attack the French, every preparation was made for the expedition. Mr. S. C. Hill writes that the request made by Siraj to Clive to join him at Patna

"gave Clive an excuse for starting, and accordingly he joined his troops on the 3rd March. On the 7th he wrote that he would assist the Nawab with pleasure; that it was dangerous to leave such enemies as the French in his rear; accordingly, it would be better to dispose of them first, and that he would wait at Chandernagore for instructions."*

But when the English received the letter from Siraj alleging to give his consent to them to attacking the French, the English did not let the grass grow under their feet, but made ready every preparation to attack the French. They also received about this time reinforcements from Bombay.

"About this time the British, whose weakness had been the original cause of their entering upon negotiations with the French, had been reinforced by troops from Bombay."†

When the "heaven-born" and Christian "General" Clive commenced his march on Chandernagore, the French were alarmed and demanded an explanation of his approach to their town. With

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CLXIII.

† *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. CLXIII and CLXIV.

that consummate hypocrisy and the art of lying of which Clive was a perfect master, he replied to them on the 9th March :—

"I have no intention of acting offensively against your nation at present ; whenever I have, you may be assured I shall frankly acquaint you with it."

It was necessary for the English to invent some pretext for the declaration of hostilities against the French. So with the ingenuity of the wolf in the fable, a pretext was invented. They were charged with entertaining deserters from the British. Clive wrote to that effect to the French on the 11th March. On the following morning, he encamped two miles westward of Chandernagore. Admiral Watson also arrived at Chandernagore by this time. On the 13th the French governor of Chandernagore was asked by the British to surrender. As the French did not do so, Clive on the 14th read the Declaration of War to his troops, and commenced the siege of Chandernagore, which he captured on the 23rd March.

Thus fell Chandernagore and with its fall departed the power and glory of the French from Bengal. The ease and rapidity with which Chandernagore was captured are to be explained by the treachery of at least one French officer;

and also of the servants in the employ of the Nawab. One French officer named Lieutenant de Terraneau betrayed to the English the passage of the river. According to Blochman,

"M. Terraneau, who in consequence of this treachery became infamous and 'black-faced,' received from the English a large sum as a reward for his ingratitude. He sent a part of the money home to his old and infirm father, who however returned it, when he heard the disgraceful behaviour of his son. M. Terraneau felt much mortified at this. Shame 'seized the hem of his garment', he shut himself up ; after a few days his body was found hanging at the gate of his house, suspended by means of a towel. It was plain that he had committed suicide." (Notes on Siraj-ud-daula, Journal of the Asiatic Society, 1867).

Nund-Kumar had been ordered to proceed to Hugli to prevent the English attacking the French. He had a large force under him. But he was bought over to the cause of the English. Amir Chand was the agent chosen by the English to do all the dirty work of occidental diplomacy and to corrupt the Nawab's officers by temptations and specious and smooth promises. According to Scrafton, the English succeeded to counteract the influence of the Nawab by "another well-applied bribe to Nun Comar."

Thornton in his History of British India (Vol. I, p. 221) wrote :—

"A body of the Subadar's troops was stationed within the bounds of Chandernagore previously to the attack. They belonged to the garrison of Hoogly, and were under the command of Nuncomar, governor of that place. Nuncomar had been bought by Omichand for the English, and on their approach, the troops of Shirajodwola were withdrawn from Chandernagore."

It is more than probable that without the treachery of Nuncomar, the English would not have succeeded in capturing Chandernagore. At a Select Committee, held 10th April, 1757 it was recorded :

"We the servants of the East India Company should always be grateful to that noble-minded and wealthy native merchant of Calcutta—Omichand. It was through his agency that we succeeded to secure the assistance and co-operation of Dewan Nuncoomar, Phoujdar of Hoogly. A body of Subadar's troops was stationed within the bounds of Chandernuggor previously to our attack of that place These troops belonged to the garrison of Hoogly, and were under the command of Dewan Nuncomar. *If these troops were not withdrawn, it would have been highly improbable to gain the victory.*"

The conduct of Amir Chand, it is very difficult to understand. He had been very badly treated by the English and yet he was ready and willing to do any dirty work for them. But he had yet to learn how "grateful" his Christian friends were to him for all the important services he had rendered to them.

"The capture of Chandernagore was of immense importance to the British. It broke the power of the French in Bengal, and left the way clear for a final settlement with the Nawab. The marine and military stores supplied Calcutta with everything that had been destroyed when that place was lost. Finally, it deprived Pondicherry and the French islands of both provisions and trade."*

THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE NAWAB.

The capture of Chandernagore greatly enraged as well as alarmed Siraj-ud-daula. Had the merchants of the other Christian nation, that is, the Dutch, been wise in their generation, they would have made common cause with the French and have fought against the British. But this they did not do and so they also not long afterwards shared the same fate as the French.

The terms of the Treaty concluded on the 9th February were not broken by Siraj, but by the English. He had asked them the loan of their troops. But when the troops had already started—not to join him but to fight the French, he wrote to them that he did not any longer require their services. On his own part, the Nawab had very scrupulously fulfilled the articles of the treaty he had entered upon with the English. But the latter on their expedition to

* S. C. Hill's *Bengal Records*, Vol. I, p. CLXXIV.

Chandernagore, passing through the territory of the Nawab, committed wanton outrages on his subjects. Of course, the Nawab never gave them permission of the passage through his dominions. So their passing through his country was a gross breach of all the established laws of nations. Siraj in a letter dated the 1st of *Rajub*, or 22nd of March 1757, wrote to Admiral Watson :—

"What I have promised and set my hand to, I will firmly maintain, nor in any respect deviate therefrom. All *Mr. Watts's* demands, and whatever he has represented to me, I have complied with, and what remains, shall be given up by the 15th of this Moon. This, *Mr. Watts* must have written to you, with all the particulars. but notwithstanding all this, it appears to me from many instances, that you seek to obliterate your agreement with me. The country within the territories of *Houghly*, *Ingely*, *Burdwan* and *Nuddea*, have been ravaged by your troops. For what cause is this? Add to this, that *Govendram Metre* wrote to *Nundcomar* by the son of *Ramden Gose*, requiring him to deliver *Colligaut*, as belonging to the districts of *Calcutta*, into his the said *Metre's* possession. What is the meaning of this? I am sure this has been done without your knowledge. In confidence of your engagement, I made peace; with the view of procuring the welfare of the country, and to prevent the ruinous consequences which would befal the royal territories from both armies, and not that the people should be trampled upon, and the revenues obstructed.

"Your endeavours should be daily to strengthen more

and more the friendship which has taken root betwixt us, and to that end put a stop to the influence of this mischief-maker, and discountenance the aforesaid *Metre* in such manner, that he may not dare to say these things, nor be guilty of such false proceedings for the future. By the will of God, the agreement shall never be infringed upon my part. I have spoken to Mr. Watts fully on this subject, the particulars of which you will have in his letter.

"P. S. I have just learned that the *French* are bringing a large force from the *Deccan*, to make war against you; for this reason I write to you, that if you stand in need of any forces of the government for your support, you will immediately acquaint me, and they shall be ready to join you whenever you shall have occasion for them."

Siraj-ud-daula in the oriental simplicity of his heart and desirous of maintaining peace wrote the above letter. But alas! he had not sufficient experience of the perfidious character of the foreigners he had to deal with. The English with whom he had to deal were not sincere and honest. That very Mr. Watson on whom he depended, was cutting the ground, as it were, under his feet and digging his grave. Mr. Watts with occidental diplomacy was trying his best to ruin him. So was also Admiral Watson.

After the capture of Chandernagore some of the fugitive French were sheltered by Siraj-ud-daula. The English demanded their surrender. To the

oriental sense of honour such a proposal is always shocking. Siraj could not hand over to the English those who had asked his protection.

Before the surrender of Chandernagore, among the articles of Capitulation proposed by the Director and Council for the French East India Company's affairs at Chandernagore, to Vice-Admiral Watson, was the following :—

"The factories of *Cossimbazar, Dacca, Patna, Jeuda,* and of *Balasore,* shall remain at the command of the chiefs who direct them."

Watson's answer to this proposal was :—

"To be settled between the Nawab and the admiral."

So the English asked the Nawab to surrender all these French factories to them. Clive wrote to him on 29th March, 1757 :—

"Watts now began to press upon the Nawab a new demand from the British—*viz.,*

"Your Excellency should deliver up to us the persons and effects of the French at Cossimbazar, and their other out-settlements, as being our enemies. We shall then be without rivals,.....".

Of course, this was a new demand on the Nawab. The English were trying to press upon him such new demands as it was not possible for him, consistently with his sense of honor, to comply with. They knew as much. But then they wanted some

pretext for a quarrel with him. As said before, Siraj had very faithfully executed almost all the articles of the original Treaty of 9th February. This was admitted even by Clive, who in his letter to Select Committee, Fort Saint George, dated Camp near Chandernagore, 30th March, 1757, wrote :—

"He (Siraj-ud-daula) has fulfilled most of the Articles of the treaty made with us. The three lack of rupees are already paid and goods and money to a considerable amount delivered up to us at our several subordinates, and I make little doubt but that all his engagements will be duly executed."*

The Moslem Prince was disgusted with the conduct and behaviour of the perfidious English. Even the editor of the *Bengal Records*, Mr. S. C. Hill, himself an Englishman and presumably a Christian, is obliged to write :—

"Watts now began to press upon the Nawab a new demand from the British—*viz.*, that the French Factories should be surrendered. The Admiral wrote several letters on the subject, but could obtain no satisfactory reply, and after his letter of the 19th April, which was couched in threatening terms, he dropped the correspondence. In fact the Admiral, though willing enough to fight the French, whom he considered the natural enemies of Britain, and

* *Bengal Records*, vol. II, p. 308.

to attack them so long as they remained capable of resistance, thought that to make their affairs the pretext of obtaining further concessions from the Nawab, with whom the British had so recently concluded a peace, was hardly consistent with his honour. *But those were days in which even the most honourable men were convinced of the necessity of trickery and chicanery in politics, and were therefore accustomed to give their tacit consent to actions which they would not commit themselves.*"*

Admiral Watson was no exception to the generality of the British. But if we are to judge Siraj-ud-daula by the standard of the Christians of those days, we shall find him to be an angel compared to Watson, Clive and Co. Poor fellow, his great fault was that he wanted to be true to himself and also to those English Christians who possessed no conscience and were strangers to honesty and veracity.

Of course the Nawab did not agree to deliver up the French factories into the hands of the English. In his letter to Clive, dated 4 April 1757, he wrote,

"that the French, by the permission and *phirmaund* of the King, have built them several Factories and carried on their trade in this Kingdom. I cannot, therefore, without hurting my character and exposing myself to trouble hereafter, deliver up their Factories and goods unless I have

* *Ibid*, vol. I, p. CLXXVI.

a written order from them for so doing, and I am persuaded that from your friendship for me you would never be glad at any thing whereby my fame would suffer, as I, for my own part, am ever desirous of promoting [your good]. Mr. Renault, the French Governor, being in your power, if you could get from him a paper under his own hand and seal to this purpose, 'That of his own will and pleasure he thereby gave up to the English company's servants, and empowered them to receive, all the Factories, money, and goods belonging to the French company without any hindrance from the Nabob's people,' and would send this to me, I should be secure by that from any trouble hereafter on this account. But it is absolutely necessary you come to some agreement about the King's duties arising from the French trade : for this reason that there may be no loss to the King. I shall then be able to answer to his servants, 'That in order to make good the duties accruing from the French trade, I had delivered up their Factories into the hands of the English."

Clive could not of course put pressure upon M. Renault, who was his prisoner. He wrote to Siraj-ud-daula on the 8th April :—

"Notwithstanding we have reduced the French so low, you, contrary to your own interest and to the treaty you have made with us that my enemies should be yours, you still support and encourge them. But should you think it would hurt your character to deliver up the French Factories and goods, your Excellency has only to signify to me your approbation and I will march up and take them."

Siraj could not agree to such a proposal.

Clive wrote to him on the 10th April complaining that some of the articles of the Treaty of the 9th February had not been executed by the Nawab. The simple-minded Asiatic Siraj, not thoroughly acquainted with the scheming and designing character of the English, was therefore no match for them in their "trickery and chicanery" in politics. Disgusted with their conduct, on the 14th of April, he wrote boldly and plainly to Watson :—

"I have written before, and now repeat, that if the *English* Company want to establish their trade, do not write me what is not conformable to our agreement, by the instigation of self-interested and designing men, who want to break the peace between us. If you are not disposed to come to a rupture with me, you have my agreement under my hand and seal ; when you write, look upon that, and write accordingly.....

"If you desire to maintain the peace, write nothing contrary to the treaty." (Ive's Voyages, p. 142).

The chief of the French Factory of Cossimbazar - M. Jean Law, was at Murshidabad. The Nawab knowing that the French were the cause of all his troubles with the English and not desiring a rupture with the latter, at one time thought of delivering over M. Jean Law and all other Frenchmen into the hands of the English. Writes Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"At last, on the 13th April, he (M. Jean Law) was summoned to a final interview with the Nawab and Mr. Watts. The latter begged him to surrender to the British, offering him the most honorable terms, whilst the Nawab told him that the French were the cause of all the troubles between him and the British and that he did not wish to embroil the country in war for the sake of a nation which had refused him assistance when he had asked for it. It seems as if the Nawab had intended to arrest Law at this interview and hand him over to the British; but the timely arrival of a guard of French grenadiers made this impossible without a sanguinary struggle,....."‡

So Siraj-ud-dowla was quite honest when on the 14th April 1757, he wrote to Watson: —

"For your satisfaction, and in observance of the agreement between us, to look upon each other's enemies as our own, I have expelled Mr. Law with all his adherents from my country, and have given strict orders to all my *Naibs* and *Fougedars* not to permit them to remain in any part of my dominions. I am ready upon all occasions to grant you my assistance. If the *French* ever enter the province with a great or small force, with a design of making war upon you; *God* and his *prophets* are between us, that whenever you write to me, I will be your ally, and join you with all my force. Rest satisfied in this point, and be assured of my resolution to remain inviolably by the promises which I have made in my letters, and in the treaty concluded betwixt us. With regard to the *French* factories

‡ *Bengal Records*, Vol. I, p. CLXXVIII.

and merchandize, I must acquaint your excellency, that I have been informed, the *French* Company are indebted to the natives, and have several *lacks* belonging to my subjects in their hands ; should I comply with your demands in delivering up the effects, how can I answer it to the creditors of the *French* ?" (Ive's Voyages, p. 142).

Siraj might have changed his mind afterwards, but there can be no doubt that he was quite sincere in his intentions when he wrote the above letter to Watson. But the real mischief-maker who was exciting Watson and Clive against the Nawab was the British Resident at his Court, Mr. Watts. When the Nawab came to know about it and the letter to him of Admiral Watson dated 19th April 1757 left no doubt in his mind of Watts being a mischief-maker, he was much enraged with his conduct. So

"on the 20th April the Nawab turned the British Agent out of the Darbar, and on the 21st presented him with a dress of honour."*

Mr. Law was made to leave Murshidabad on the 26th April, and proceeded towards Behar. Stewart, in his History of Bengal writes :—

"Mr. Law, who appears to have been well acquainted with the politics of Moorsheedabad, told the Nawab, that most of his chiefs were dissatisfied with him, that they were

* *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CLXXX.

leaguing with the English against him, and that, on the departure of the French, the smothered flame would burst forth and destroy him. Siraj-ud-dowla felt the truth of his observation, but had not resolution to detain him ; he however promised to send for him, should anything occur ; but Mr. Law prophetically said, 'I know we shall never meet again.' "

This information to Siraj by Mr. Law must have been an additional motive with the Nawab for ill treating the British agent in the manner described above.

The British were intriguing and conspiring against the Nawab, whom they were bent upon dethroning and thus effecting a revolution in Bengal. From the very day Watts arrived at Murshidabad he commenced his campaign of conspiracy against Siraj. It is not on record that he personally approached any of the courtiers of the Moslem prince. But he used as his tool a Punjabi merchant by the name of Amir Chand. To this man was entrusted all the dirty work of occidental diplomacy, and he succeeded so well that within about two months of the ratification of the Treaty the conspiracy against Siraj was very well advanced. One Mr. Scrafton, who had gone to Murshidabad in connection with the Cossimbazar factory, wrote to Mr. Walsh, on 20th April 1757 :—

"Young minds cannot keep resentment long concealed ;

his heart broke out to-day. When our *vacqueel* went to him, the instant he saw him he ordered him to be turned out of the Durbar; as the fellow was going he overheard him say, 'I will destroy them and their nation.' Meer Jaffer was ordered to march and he would follow himself; when asked the reason, he said: 'they are always writing me to deliver up the French; I will receive no more of their letters.' *But for God's sake let us pacify him for the present; things are not ripe.....Give me but power and I dare swear that in ten days I could settle that you shall be joined by a large force as soon as you have marched two days north.*"*

By smooth and specious promises and also by other means which can be very easily guessed, the English succeeded in seducing the courtiers of Siraj. Writes Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"The British Agent, having the deeper purse, was able to influence not only the leading men at Court, but also the Secretaries, and was much assisted by the foresighted cunning of Omichand,.....Omichand had won over Nand Kumar, the *Faujdar* of Hugli,..."†

The principal conspirators whom the British had raised through the instrumentality of Amir Chand, were the Jain bankers known as the Seths, Meer Jaffer, Manick Chand, Raj Ballav, and Durlabh Ram. They had their own selfish motives

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 349.
† *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. CLXXVII.

and interests to serve by conspiring against the Nawab. The Seths proposed Yar Lutf Khan to the throne. This man was of low origin and although he was in the service of the Nawab, being a Commander of 2,000 troops, he was in the pay of the Seths, for he afforded them protection. But the English did not encourage the nomination of Yar Lutf Khan.

The other aspirant for the throne of Bengal was Meer Jaffer. He was more influential than Yar Lutf and was also related to Siraj. Mr. Watts wrote to Calcutta on the 26th April, 1757, that Meer Jaffer had informed him through one Armenian Coja Petrus that he, together with others, was ready to assist the British in overthrowing the Nawab. Mr. Watts wrote:—

"If you approve of this scheme, which is more feasible than the other I wrote about, he (Mir Jafar) requests you will write your proposals of what money, what land you want, or what treaties you will engage in."

At the same time the English, not to rouse the suspicions of the Nawab, tried their best to show him that they were his friends ! Wrote Macaulay :—

"He (Clive) wrote to Siraj-ud-dowla in terms so affectionate that they for a time lulled that weak prince into perfect security. The same courier who carried this 'soothing letter,' as Clive calls it, carried to Mr. Watts a letter in the following terms : 'Tell Meer Jaffer to fear nothing. I

will join him with five thousand men who never turned their backs. Assure him, I will march night and day to his assistance, and stand by him as long as I have a man left."

It is not necessary to describe in detail all the means which the English adopted to lull the suspicions of the Moslem Prince. Siraj was a simple-minded oriental youth, and so he failed to understand the schemes and designs of the occidental traders.

Amir Chand had been of the greatest possible use to the English. Without his assistance they could not have captured Chandernagore. This was admitted by Clive and others at a Select Committee, held 10th April, 1757, when they wrote :—

"We the servants of the East India Company should always be grateful to that noble-minded and wealthy native merchant of Calcutta—Omichand."

Again, it was he who was instrumental in making their conspiracy a success and getting Siraj dethroned. If the English were a nation of shop-keepers, Amir Chand also belonged to that category. He did all the dirty work of occidental diplomacy, and now he thought that the time had arrived when he ought to be handsomely rewarded for all his troubles, and the services rendered to the foreigners. Amir Chand was false to himself,

false to his Sovereign and nation, but true to the Christians whom he had very faithfully served. It is said that there is honor among thieves. But these foreign thieves represented by Clive, Watson & Co., lacked in all sense of honor and honesty. They were ungrateful wretches who did not scruple to deceive Amir Chand by the foulest means that ever disgraced the annals of the human race. Amir Chand knew that, after dethroning or murdering Siraj, they would plunder the royal treasury, and so he insisted on demanding for himself 5 per cent. on all the royal treasure and also a share in the booty in gems and pearls. Of course these ungrateful persons made use of Amir Chand as a tool to serve their purpose, but would not listen to his demands. So they decided to cheat him, and the Christian Clive who is called 'the Heaven-born general,' and looked upon as the founder of the supremacy of England in India deceived the heathen Amir Chand by forgery. These foreigners were in the hands of Amir Chand, and it would have been dangerous to have told him that they could not comply with his demands. Accordingly, Clive wrote to Watts :—

"Flatter Omy Chand greatly, tell him the Admiral, Committee, and self are infinitely obliged to him for the

pains he has taken to aggrandize the Company's affairs, and that his name will be greater in England than ever it was in India. If this can be brought to bear, to give him no room for suspicion we take off 10 *lack* from the 30 demanded for himself, and add 5 *per cent.* upon the whole sum received, which will turn out the same thing."

When arraigned before the Parliamentary Committee, Clive was not ashamed to inform the honorable members that

"When Mr. Watts had nearly accomplished the means of carrying that Revolution into execution, he acquainted him by letter that a fresh difficulty had started; that Omichand had insisted upon 5 *per cent.* on all the Nawab's treasures, and thirty *lack* in money, and threatened if he did not comply with that demand he would immediately acquaint Serajah Dowlah with what was going on, and Mr. Watts should be put to death. That when he received this advice he thought art and policy warrantable in defeating the purposes of such a villain, and that his Lordship himself formed that plan of the fictitious treaty to which the Committee consented....That his Lordship never made any secret of it; he thinks it warrantable in such a case, and would do it again a hundred times."

Those "honorable" members were not scandalised at the conduct of their heaven-born general, for had they been, they would have ordered his immediate execution by hanging, for in those days according to the laws of England, forgery was punished with death. But those "honorable"

members must have considered cheating a "heathen" by means of forgery very good fun and so Clive was rewarded with a peerage. For committing an ignoble deed, he was raised to the nobility !

It was proposed by Clive and his Christian colleagues to draw up two treaties, one containing an Article granting Amir Chand the sum he demanded, and another treaty from which it should be excluded. Admiral Watson declined to be a party to deceive Amir Chand and so refused to sign the fictitious treaty. But by Clive's order, a man named Mr. Lushington forged Watson's signature on the false treaty—upon red paper—and this was shown to Amir Chand.*

* The following is an account of the famous Omichand incident in the words used by Clive himself in the House of Commons: "The treachery and perfidy of Siraj-ud Daulah was never at rest. A French army was expected which might have proved fatal to us. Omichand insisted upon thirty lacs of rupees and 5 per cent. upon all the treasure that was found. I did not hesitate to discover out a stratagem, for the lives of the English people at Cossimbazar would have been lost if Omichand had informed the Nawab. The Treaty was signed by every one except Watson, and I should have considered myself sufficiently authorised to have put his name to it by the conversation I had with him. As to the person who signed Admiral Watson's name to the

The original treaty made between the English and the Moslem traitor, Mir Jafar, consisted of 13 articles but the fictitious one of 14. It bound Mir Jafar to confirm all the grants and privileges allowed by Siraj to the English, and he had to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with them. All Frenchmen and their factories were to be delivered up to the British and they were not to be permitted to resettle in Bengal. The Company was to receive one crore of Rupees for the loss sustained by the destruction of Calcutta and for the expenses of the war. The British inhabitants were to receive 50, the Hindus 20 and the Armenians 7 *lacks* of rupees for their losses at the capture of

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treaty, whether he did it in his presence or not I cannot say, but this I know that he thought he had sufficient authority for so doing as the existence of the Company was at stake, as also were the lives of the people in the English settlement at Cossimbazar, and I hold it was a matter of policy and justice to deceive so great a villain." In his own evidence before the Committee, Clive said :—"I should not have declared that Watson had consented to have his name put to the fictitious treaty, if I had not understood it from Lushington. But I would have commanded his name to be put whether the Admiral consented or not. I thought art and and policy warrantable in defeating such a villain as Omichand, the Council assented to it "

Calcutta. The Company to be put in possession of all the land within the Calcutta Ditch and 600 yards all round; and also to receive the *Zamindari* of the country south of Calcutta between the River and the Salt Lakes as far as Calpee. The Nawab to pay British troops when required for his defence. He was not to erect fortifications on the river below Hughli. He should comply with these articles within 30 days of his being acknowledged Nawab. The Company would assist him against his enemies as long as he would comply with the Treaty.

The Battle of Plassey.

The Select Committee at Calcutta had placed the management of their affairs in the hands of Clive and Watts. How Clive managed their affairs satisfactorily by forgery has already been mentioned. But Watts, who was playing the part of an occidental diplomatist to perfection, was a coward. To conclude the treaty with Mir Jaffer he did not dare go openly to that Moslem traitor's palace. But late at night of 4th June 1757, he was taken by an Armenian, Coja Petrus, in a *dooley* which is used only by women and therefore 'inviolable' to see Mir Jaffer, who signed the Treaty.

Siraj, it has already been said, was deceived by

the British, and lulled into security. He was thrown off his guard and so had dismissed half his army. The time was arriving, however, when the English thought it was no longer necessary to keep on the cloak of friendship meant to deceive the Nawab. But Watts and some other Britishers were still at Murshidabad, and as long as they were there it would not do to inform the Nawab of their treacherous intentions. On the evening of the 12th June these men, on the pretext of a little hunting, obtained the Nawab's permission to leave Murshidabad. The next day the Nawab fully grasping the situation by the flight of Watts and other Englishmen was no longer left in doubt as to their treachery. So on that day, he wrote the following letter to Watson as well as to Clive :

"According to my promises, and the agreement made between us, I have duly rendered everything to Mr. *Watts* except a very small remainder, and had almost settled *Manick Chand's* affair : Notwithstanding all this, Mr. *Watts* and the rest of the Council of the factory at *Cossimbazar*, under pretence of going to take the air in their gardens, fled away in the night. This is an evident mark of deceit, and of an intention to break the treaty. I am convinced it could not have happened without your knowledge, nor without your advice. I all along expected something of this kind, and for that reason I would not recall my forces from *Plassey*, expecting some treachery.

"I praise God, that the breach of the treaty has not been on my part : God and his *Prophet* have been witness to the contract made between us, and whoever first deviates from it will bring upon themselves the punishment due to their actions."*

Poor Siraj did not know the nature and extent of the conspiracy that had been concocted against him. He as an honest and inexperienced youth, relied for support on that very arch-conspirator whom the English were making the tool to serve their purpose. Ali Verdi Khan used to make his officers swear on the Koran to be faithful to him whenever he saw any trace of mutinous spirit among them. He tried the same expedient and went to see Mir Jaffer, begged him to agree to a reconciliation and accepted his promise solemnly made on the Koran to be true to him.

But it was the perfidious Meer Jaffer who advised Clive to march on to Plassey when everything was ready. Ives writes.

"On the 12th of *June*, advice was received from *Meer Jaffier* and the other confederates, that all things were in readiness with them. The dye was cast ; and on the 13th of *June*, the whole army marched forwards,....."†

That very day, that is, on the 13th June, Clive

* Ives' *Voyages*, p. 145.

† *Ibid*, p. 148.

wrote to Siraj a letter charging him with not exe cuting the articles of the Treaty and telling him that

"he had determined, with the approbation of all who were charged with the Company's affairs, to proceed immediately to *Cossimbazar*, and submit their disputes to the arbitration of *Meer Jaffier*. *Roydullub*, *Jugget-Seet*, and others of his great men ; that if it should be found, that he, the Colonel, had deviated from the treaty, he then swore to give up all farther claims ; but that, if it appeared his excellency had broken it, he should then demand satisfaction for all the losses sustained by the *English*, and all the charges of their army and navy, and concluded with telling him, 'that the rains being so near, and it requiring many days to receive an answer, he had found it necessary to wait upon him immediately.'"*

It is not necessary to describe in detail the march of the troops under Clive to Plassey. Plassey, which is twenty miles away from Murshidabad, was so named because it contained groves of *palas* (Butea frondosa).† Siraj, as mentioned in his

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* *Ibid*, p. 149.

† The following account of Plassey is taken from Mr. H. Beveridge's interesting article contributed to the *Calcutta Review* for April 1892 (p. 342) :

"Plassey (Palasi) is now in the district of Nadiya,..... It formerly belonged to the Murshidabad district, and perhaps ought to belong to it still, for it is ten miles nearer Berhampore than it is to Krishnagur. It is part of what

letter of 12th June 1757 to Watson, had stationed an army at Plassey expecting the treachery of the foreigners. Here on the 23rd June a battle was fought which certainly did not reflect any credit on the arms of the English, least of all on "the heaven-born general" and notorious forger, Clive. Writes his friend and patron, the historian Orme: —

"Some say he was asleep; which is not improbable, considering how little rest he had for so many hours before; but this is no imputation either against his courage or conduct.'

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used to be called Kasimbazar island, and Ramnagar Factory and other places opposite it, or south-west of it, are still in Murshidabad, though on the other side of the River. Apparently the name Plassey comes from the palas tree (*Butea frondosa*) but there are no palas trees in the village, and perhaps there never were any. Plassey is the name of the pargana, a tract of country 240 miles square, as well as of the village, so the eponymous trees may have been elsewhere.

"Plassey is a large village, containing some 250 houses and several thousand acres.....The grove of Plassey has entirely disappeared. In 1802 Lord Valentia changed bearers here. He speaks of the magnificent tope; but the last tree died in 1879. The stumps and roots are said to have been dug up and sent to England; and the natives have a story that the *Saheb* who did this, died immediately afterwards. The grove, the Palasi Bagh of native writers, was an orchard composed of mango and other fruit trees."

Siraj's army was demoralized and corrupted by the English. There were traitors in his camp, the most notorious being Meer Jaffer, his commander-in-chief, who had a secret understanding with the British. Taking all these things into consideration, it is not to be wondered at that Siraj lost the day at Plassey. The verdict of Colonel Malleson on that battle is so just and appropriate, that it is given below.

"It was only when treason had done her work, when treason had driven the Nuab from the field, when treason had removed his army from its commanding position, that Clive was able to advance without the certainty of being annihilated. Plassey, then, though a decisive, can never be considered a great, battle."*

The infamous Clive also in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee said :—

"The battle being attended with so little bloodshed, arose from two causes ; first,—the army was sheltered by so high a bank that the heavy artillery of the enemy could not possibly make them much mischief. The other was,—that Suraja Doula had not confidence in his army, nor his army any confidence in him, and therefore, they did not do their duty."

Clive should have told the members of the Parliamentary Committee what he had done to demoralize and corrupt the Nawab's army.

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* *Decisive Battles of India*, p. 73.

Fate was against Siraj. The death of his faithful general Mir Madan made him lose all hope of a victory at Plassey. Mr. H. Beveridge says :—

"The real Musalman hero of Plassey was Mir Madan,..... He was killed by a cannon ball, while endeavouring to carry the grove.....Mir Madan's fate resembles that of Talmash in 1694. Both were the victims of treachery, and both were killed by a cannon ball in the thigh.....

"It is interesting to find that the villagers of Plassey knew something about the battle. They spoke of the treachery of Mir Jaffar and the heroism of Mir Madan, and one man was enthusiastic enough to say that Mir Madan's fame would last as long as the world."*

The day was lost and Siraj on the evening of the fatal 23rd June, which was a Thursday, left the battle field of Plassey and, riding on an elephant, made haste to reach his capital, where he arrived early next morning. The news of the disaster at Plassey spread like wild fire all over the country. Siraj, to retrieve the disaster tried again to collect troops. The sun of Siraj's fortune had set and as no one worships the setting sun, so hardly any one came to the rescue of that Mohammedan prince. Even his father-in-law deserted him. Writes a Christian historian :

"Even his wife's father, Mahammed Eeruch Khan,

* *The Calcutta Review* for April 1892, p. 343.

though the Nabab begged him to stay and collect troops, either to defend him where he was, or to accompany him in his retreat, refused and hastened to his own house at the city of Moorshidabad."*

Siraj-ud-dowla's treasury was full, aye over flowing. He tried now with his money to raise and collect troops, but in this also he failed. Writes the same Christian author who has been already quoted above :—

"As a last resource, the Nabab opened the doors of his treasury, and distributed large sums to the soldiers ; who received his bounty and deserted him with it to their homes." (Ibid, p. 369).

Before the Parliamentary Committee of 1772 on Indian affairs, Clive in his Evidence said that

"When Shirajadaula arrived at the city his palace was full of treasure ; but with all that treasure he could not purchase the confidence of his army : he was employed in lavishing considerable sums among his troops to engage them to another battle, but to no purpose."

He was advised by some of his courtiers to surrender himself to the British. It is needless to say that he treated this advice with that contempt which it very richly deserved.

Poor Siraj ! he left Murshidabad, for Meer

* Scott's *History of Bengal*, p. 369.

Jaffer was approaching it. He took the road leading to Bhagvangola, disguised as a fakir.*

Let us now turn to Clive and Mir Jafar whom we left at Plassey. The heaven-born general did not stay at Plassey after the battle, for he was afraid lest his troops should disperse to plunder. Clive marched on to Dadpur which he reached by 8 P. M. Here he halted for the night. And it was here that on the next morning, *i. e.*, the 24th June, that Mir Jaffer presented himself before him.

On the evening of the 23rd Clive had sent Messrs. Watts and Scrafton to wait on Meer Jaffer, and again next morning, he sent Omar Beg, with whom, accompanied by his son, Miran, Meer Jaffer appeared in Clive's camp. 'Tis conscience which makes cowards of us all, and that traitor was afraid to appear before Clive lest he would arrest him. So when on his approach to Clive's camp, the guard turned out

"to recieve him as he passed, he started as if he thought

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* Clive in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee said :

"About twelve at night the fatal news was brought him of Meer Jaffer's arrival at the city, closely followed by the English army. He then in despair gave up all for lost, and made his escape out of one of the palace windows, with only two or three attendants,.....".

it was all over with him ; nor did his countenance brighten up till the Colonel embraced him, and saluted him *Subah* of the three provinces."*

Clive

"assured Meer Jaffer that the English would most religiously perform their treaty, and advised him to pursue Serajah Dowla without delay, and he would follow with the English Army."†

At the same time Mir Jafar informed Clive that he was determined to carry out the terms of the Treaty he had concluded with the English.

Meer Jaffer marched and reached Murshidabad early on the morning of the 25th. Clive also followed him and arrived on the 26th and encamped at the French Factory at Saidabad, but did not enter Murshidabad till the 29th instant. According to Clive,

"The city of Muxadavad is as extensive, populous, and rich, as the city of London ; with this difference that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than any of the last city."

Mahomedan rule, according to the estimate of European writers, was a blight and a curse to the people of India and the Mahomedan rulers were tyrants. If these allegations were true, how

* Scrafton's *Reflections*, p. 90.

† *First Parliamentary Report*, 1772, p. 155.

do these writers account for the prosperity of the people living under Mahomedan rulers?

In his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee, Clive is reported to have said

"That the English army having encamped within about six miles of Muxadavad, his Lordship sent Messrs. Watts and Walsh to congratulate Meer Jaffer upon his success, and to know the time when he should enter the city; in consequence of which, the day was fixed upon, and he entered the City at the head of 200 Europeans and 500 *sepoys*. That the inhabitants, who were spectators upon that occasion, must have amounted to some hundred thousands; and if they had an inclination to have destroyed the Europeans, they might have done it with sticks and stones."

It would be idle to speculate what the course of Indian history would have been, if the inhabitants of Murshidabad had done so.

Meer Jaffer was a creature of the British. So he hesitated—rather, at first declined, to take his seat on the *musnad* in their presence. In his letter to the Select Committee, Fort William, dated Muxadavad, 30th June, 1757, Clive wrote :—

"In the afternoon" (of 29th June), "I waited on Jaffeir Ally Cawn, being escorted to him by his son. As I found he declined taking his seat on the *musnad*, I handed him to it; and saluted him as Nawab, upon which his courtiers congratulated him and paid him the usual homage."

It was now time for these foreigners, who had

their prototypes in Cortez and Pizarro, to fleece their creature and grow rich at his expense. So, according to Clive's evidence before the Parliamentary Committee,

"A day was then fixed upon to consider the state of the Nabob's treasures and to see how far he would comply with the treaty immediately; and that after that state was known this matter was left to be decided by the Seats, two men of immense wealth and great influence, and it was agreed that half should be paid down and the other half in three years. That at this meeting was Omichand, and when the real treaty came to be read, the indignation and resentment expressed in that man's countenance bars all description. He said, 'This cannot be the treaty; it was a red treaty that I saw.' That his Lordship replied, 'Yes, Omichand, but this is a white treaty.' "*

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* Orme, the friend of Clive, writes in his History of Indostan, Vol. II, p. 82 :—

"The Conference being ended, Clive and Scrafton went towards Omichand, who was awaiting in full assurance of hearing the glad tidings of his good fortune, when Clive said, 'It is now time to undeceive Omichand,' on which Scrafton said to him in the Indostan language, 'Omichand, the red paper is a trick: you are to have nothing.' These words overpowered him like a blast of sulphur; he sank back fainting and would have fallen to the ground had not one of his attendants caught him in his arms; they carried him to his *palankin*, in which they conveyed him to his house, where he remained many hours in stupid melancholy

It did not cost Clive and his compatriots and correligionists any pang of conscience—supposing they were endowed with that commodity at all, to have cheated Amir Chand, who had all along been so useful to them and had rendered important services without which they could not have succeeded in their nefarious scheme of dethroning Siraj and effecting the revolution in Bengal.

But the only aim in life of these persons was to amass money. Mammon was their God. They had come out to India to shake the Pagoda tree and grow rich. By the overthrow of Siraj, every English subaltern became £3,000 the richer.

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and began to show some signs of insanity. Some days after he visited Colonel Clive, who advised him to make a pilgrimage to some *Pagoda*, which he accordingly did soon after to a famous one near Maulda; he went and returned insane, his mind every day approaching more and more to idiotism, and contrary to the usual manners of old age in Indostan, still more to the former excellence of his understanding, he delighted in being continually dressed in the richest garments and ornamented with the most costly jewels. In this state of inbecility he died about a year and a half after the shock of his disappointment."

Mr. H. Beveridge writes:—

"It was in Jagat Sett's house that Omichand was told that the red treaty was a fraud. .....In August, 1757, we find Clive writing that, as Omichand's intriguing disposition

Clive was considered such a great hero by his compatriots that it is recorded :

In addition to his statue erected in the India House, a medal was struck commemorating the battle of Plassey, and in honor of Lord Clive. The following is a description of it :—"On one side is Lord Clive holding the British flag in one hand, and with the other bestowing the Subahship on Meer Jaffier : a globe, cornucopia, and an antique rudder, are grouped together ; the cornucopia symbolising the riches bestowed on the English for their losses at Calcutta ; the rudder the increase of commerce and commercial privileges, and the globe the territorial acquisitions, the consequences of the victory." The inscription is "a Soubah given to Bengal."

On the reverse of the medal is Victory seated on an elephant, bearing a trophy in one hand, and a plam-branch

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was carrying him too far, he had recommended him to make a visit of devotion to Maldah. This was like the Delhi Emperors sending troublesome subjects on pilgrimages to Mecca. But Maldah was too near Murshidabad for such a purpose, and there is no famous pagoda there, such as Orme speaks of. Perhaps Maldah is a mistake for Malwah, where the holy Nerbuddah flows ; or its capital, Mandu, may be the place meant." (*Calcutta Review*, April 1892, page 341).

Had Amir Chand shown signs of insanity after being informed of the trick the British had played on him, Clive would not have written the following letter, dated 6th August, 1757, to the Court of Directors :—

"Omichand had merited well while acting in concert with

in the other, with the inscription, "Victory of Plassey," "Clive Commander."

P. 262, *Services of the First European Regiment*: London: Smith, Elder & Co., 65, Cornhill. 1843.

THE DEATH OF SIRAJ.

Siraj fled from Murshidabad, with the object, it would seem, to get the aid of M. Law and the troops under him. That French officer, after leaving Murshidabad in the middle of May, had arrived at Patna on the 3rd June. He was waiting there when on 22nd June he received the news of

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Mr. Watts, but I had reason to think his intriguing disposition was carrying him too far in the pursuit of his private interest, therefore recommended to him a visit of devotion to Malda. He is a person capable of rendering you great services while properly restrained, therefore not to be wholly discarded." (Long's Selections, p. 109).

According to the researches of the late Mr. Justice Saradacharan Mitra, who contributed a very interesting article to the Bengali monthly, *Sahitya Samhita*, of 1899, Amirchand died on the 5th December, 1758 and that a few days before his death he intended to go on a pilgrimage to Amritsar. He drew up a will and made Hazari Mall the executor. From this will, Mr. Mitra infers that Amir Chand was a *Nanak panthi*, i. e., a disciple of Guru Nanak.

The above facts disprove the statement of Orme, which other European historians and writers have copied, that Amir Chand turned insane after being cheated by Clive.

the flight of Watts and other Englishmen from Murshidabad. Hostilities with that nation being certain, he wrote to Siraj to wait for him. He also hurried to his assistance as fast as he could, but was delayed by wind and storm. When however he learnt of the disaster that had befallen Siraj-ud-daula at Plassey and that that prince was a fugitive, and to whom it was impossible for him to render any aid, he retraced his steps and went back to Patna.

At Rajmahal Siraj was detected, captured and sent back to Murshidabad. Clive, in his letter to the Select Committee, Fort William, dated Muxadabad, late at night, 30 June, 1757, wrote :—

".....I have received a note from the Nabob informing me that Surajah Dowlat is taken and that he has dispatched his son to secure him."

That unhappy prince was brought to Murshidabad on the 2nd of July and Mir Jafar handed him over to his son, Miran, to take care of him. On that very night, Siraj-ud-daula was murdered in cold blood by one Mahommed Baig, acting, of course, under the orders of the higher authorities. His mangled body was carried on an elephant through the streets of the town.

One Mahommedan historian, the author of *Riyaz-us-salateen*, plainly writes :—

"Siraj-ud-Dowla was put to death at the instigation of the English Chiefs and Jagat Seth."

There can be no doubt that Clive instigated the assassination of Siraj. Stewart in a footnote to the last page of his history of Bengal writes:—

"In justice to the memory of Colonel Clive, I think it requisite to state, that none of the native Historians impute any participation in the death of Siraj-ud-Dowla to him. It is generally believed, that the capture of the Nawab was kept a secret from the Colonel, till after he had suffered."

There is no truth whatever in this statement. Meer Jaffer, who, as this writer himself says, "was nicknamed, by one of the wits of the Court, 'Colonel Clive's ass,' and retained the title till his death," did not venture to do anything without the advice of Clive. He had informed Clive of the capture of Siraj-ud-daula, which news Clive '*late at night, 30th June 1757*,' transmitted to Calcutta. So to say "that the capture of the Nawab was kept a secret from the Colonel" is not true.*

* Again we find Clive writing to the Select Committee, Fort William and the two Admirals, dated 2nd July, 1757,

"Surajah Dowlat will be in the City this evening; the Nabob who is a humane, generous and honest Prince intends only to confine him and to allow him all the indulgence which a prison can admit of."

From the extract from *Rayaz-us-Salateen* given above, it will be seen that the people of Murshidabad suspected the complicity of the Europeans in the assassination of Siraj. And very probably it was Clive who instigated this foul deed.

Our suspicion is confirmed by the conduct and behaviour of Clive towards Meer Jaffer and his son after the tragic event of Siraj's death. In his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee, Clive is reported to have said :—

"In regard to the fate of Serajah Dowla, his Lordship said he had been informed, that he fled and took shelter in a *fackier's* house,.....and that he was brought from thence to the city and immediately put to death by Meer ham,

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So Clive uttered a barefaced lie when he told the Parliamentary Committee that he knew nothiug about Siraj being brought a captive to Murshidabad.

From the *sangfroid* with which he informed the Select Committee, Fort William, of the death of Siraj there is very little room not to suspect that Clive instigated the assassination of that unfortunate prince. Thus Clive wrote on the 4th July :—

"Gentlemen,—Surajah Dowlat is no more. The Nabob would have spared him, but his son Miran and the *great men* thought his death necessary for the peace of the country, as on his approach to the city, the *jamidars* grew mutinous."

Was not Clive one of "*the great men*" ?

Meer Jaffier's son ; it is said without the father's knowledge ; that his Lordship knew nothing of it till the next day, when the Nabab made him acquainted with it, and apologized for his conduct by saying that he had raised a mutiny among his troops ; and this was all his Lordship knew of the matter."

Of course, his lordship was a brazenfaced liar. He knew when Siraj was captured, as is evident from his letter to the Select Committee, Fort William, already quoted above. It passes our understanding how he could have been kept ignorant of the fact when Siraj was brought captive to Murshidabad by Meer Jaffer, who was nicknamed as his lordship's 'ass"? Can any man in his senses believe that Meer Jaffer or any one under him would have ventured to do such a dastardly deed as the assassination of Siraj without

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Again, in the postscript to his letter dated Muxadavad, 4 July, 1757, Clive wrote to the Select Committee, Fort St. George :—

"Surajah Dowla arrived in the city the 2nd at night and was immediately despatched having created some commotions in the army by the letters he wrote on the road to the several *jemidars*."

There is no expression of sorrow or regret in any one of Clive's letters at the murder of Siraj. All these circumstances go to confirm the suspicion that Clive was implicated in the assassination of Siraj.

receiving some sort of encouragement, explicit or implied, from Clive? More especially when it is remembered that Clive and his colleagues were the arbiters of the destiny of Meer Jaffer and his family?*

Even assuming for the sake of argument that Clive did not instigate the assassination of Siraj, why did he not condemn this deed and take some steps to punish its perpetrator or perpetrators? The British blame and condemn Siraj and try to fix the responsibility on his shoulders for the so-called Black Hole Tragedy. But these very people have not a word to say condemning the conduct of the perpetrators of the assassination of Siraj.

Siraj was a spirited youth, and notwithstanding all that the Europeau writers have said, he was an able man. It was, therefore, considered politically expedient to destroy him, for otherwise he might have given some trouble to the English.

Siraj was not more than twenty-five years of age at the time of his murder. He reigned alto-

* "For the moment, the grandees at Murshidabad regarded Clive as the symbol of power, the arbiter of fate, the type of omnipotence who could protect or destroy at will."

Wheeler's Early Records of British India, p. 261.

gether about fifteen months. The writers of the English race, from interested motives, have painted him in the darkest color possible and do not seem to find a single redeeming feature in his character. Siraj's private character was, no doubt, bad. But then how many Englishmen of that period were, in their private characters, paragons of virtue ? Take the case of his opponent, the heaven-born general, Robert Clive. Was he not a moral leper ?

The English behaved most treacherously towards him. Their only excuse was that it was necessity which made them do so. Even one of their writers says :

"Necessity, which in politics usually supersedes all oaths, treaties or forms whatever, induced the English East India Company's representatives, about three months after the execution of the former treaty, to determine 'by the blessing of God' upon dispossessing the Nabab Seraj-ud-Dowla of his Nizamut, and giving it to another" (Bolt's Considerations, p. 40).

If Europeans can try to explain away their perfidious conduct, certainly strong and cogent reasons can be adduced in favor of Siraj's alleged intrigues with the French, which mainly caused all his troubles and ruin.

No unprejudiced historian can blame Siraj for

the Black Hole Tragedy, even assuming that that tragedy was not a myth.

Siraj had to deal with men who lacked all sense of honor and honesty. He had traitors in his camp whom the English had raised. Of course with such men, it was impossible for him to rule his subjects justly or fight his enemies successfully.

When Clive and his colleagues started from Madras on their expedition to Bengal, they were instructed to effect a revolution in that province so as to benefit their trade. Writes Mr. S. C. Hill :—

"It was not, therefore, unnatural for people" (in England) "to ask whether the action of the Select Committee of Bengal had been altogether honest and disinterested, and whether the hope of what they might themselves obtain from the overthrow of Siraj-ud-daula had not to some extent influenced their attitude as representatives of the East India Company towards that Prince."*

Siraj was reputed to be a very rich prince and his treasury not only full but overflowing. So there can be no doubt that Clive and his friends tried to effect that in Bengal which Cortez and Pizzaro had done in Mexico and Peru. This alone can satisfactorily explain the treacherous conduct of the English towards Siraj. Of all the English historians, perhaps

* Bengal Records, Vol. I, p. CCXI.

Colonel Malleson has tried to do some justice to Siraj. He writes:

"Whatever may have been his faults, Siraju'ddaulah had neither betrayed his master nor sold his country. Nay more, no unbiassed Englishman, sitting in judgment on the events which passed in the interval between the 9th February and the 23rd June, can deny that the name of Siraju'ddaula stands higher in the scale of honor than does the name of Clive. He was the only one of the principal actors in that tragic drama who did not attempt to deceive."*

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* *Decisive Battles of India*, p. 71.

CHAPTER II.

Mir Jaffer and His Rule.

The battle of Plassey was fought for a treacherous cause, in which the English prostituted their military strength. They did not, of course, fight for it with any object of the conquest of Bengal, but to effect a revolution in that province, so as to benefit their trade. And when Clive entered Muxadavad, after the battle of Plassey, he did not enter it as a conquering hero. Nay, on the contrary, he was afraid to enter that capital, and had to wait outside its outskirts, till its inhabitants had been pacified.

So it is quite evident that Clive could not be regarded as a conqueror. He also never considered himself so. The people of the country looked upon him as a friend and not an enemy and so they suffered him to enter their capital without molestation. But could they have guessed the scheming designs of Clive and his compatriots, which they entertained against their independence and their earthly possessions, they would have treated him and his countrymen very

differently from what they did. The people of India are very simple-minded and are no match for occidental diplomatists. They believed in all the specious promises and friendly professions of the English traders. But the time was fast approaching when they were rudely awakened and the faith they had pinned in the promises and professions of the English was shattered. No one realised more correctly the true character of the English than Meer Jaffer. In his after years he bitterly rued the day when he allowed himself to be entangled in the cobweb of intrigues which the English had so finely spun round him and in which like an unsuspecting fly he fell.

Traitors are always detestable creatures. They of course lack moral stamina and also very generally high intellectual gifts and imagination. So they can never be called Statesmen. They are not inspired by lofty altruistic motives but swayed by most sordid personal ambition and selfish aggrandisement to do most dirty work. Such a man was Meer Jaffer. And no wonder that as a ruler he was a miserable failure. He had no training as a ruler of men.

He had never handled the state machine, and so was not acquainted with the parts, joints and springs which move it and set it going smoothly.

And he also did not know how to lubricate and oil the machine to remove friction.

Ali Verdi Khan had usurped the throne of Bengal, though not by any extraneous help or by intriguing with some foreign and unscrupulous merchants. So he knew that the stability of his kingdom could only last by securing the good will of the people, by promoting their happiness and by advancing the proper persons without distinction of creed and caste to high positions of trust and honor. It was, therefore, that to almost all the high posts in his gift, Hindus were mostly appointed, because they not only formed the majority of his tax-paying subjects, but also because they were the fittest persons for those posts.

The policy inaugurated by Ali Verdi was rigidly followed by Siraj-ud-daula. His reign lasted only fifteen months and he had to contend against conspiracies and plots concocted against him, to which he ultimately succumbed. So his short reign can not afford any criterion for the policy of his grand-father which he so rigidly followed.

But Meer Jaffer tried to upset the policy of Ali Verdi and to replace the Hindu functionaries by those of his own creed. The step which he took was not one which could enlist the sympathies of his subjects for him. But perhaps he did not care for

their sympathies. He leaned for support on foreign bayonets. But those foreigners made use of him as their catspaw to serve their ulterior designs and threw him overboard when it was convenient for, when it paid, them to do so ; since they did not possess any sense of honor or honesty.

The first Hindu official whom Meer Jaffer tried to extirpate was Ram Narain, the Governor of Behar. He was one of Ali Verdi's men and so he was loyal to his family. He was not in the cabal that had been formed against Siraj-ud-daula in Bengal. He was at variance with a brother and and brother-in-law of Meer Jaffer. Rai Durlabh, one of the principal conspirators against Siraj, knowing the animosity of Ram Narain against Meer Jaffer and his relations, and also how loyal he was to the family of Ali Verdi, did not attempt to gain his concurrence to the conspiracy. When M. Law had left Murshidabad and reached Patna, Ram Narain treated him with all the marks of honour and kept him in his province as an important resource to Siraj, in the event of the latter's hostilites with the English. When hostilities actually broke out, M. Law set out to the assistance of Siraj; but before he could reach the scene of operations and be of any assistance to him the

battle of Plassey had been fought and Siraj made prisoner and secretly assassinated at the instigation of Clive and his compatriots. M. Law had to retire to Patna.

For the security of the English it was necessary to pursue M. Law; otherwise it would possible for that Frenchman to make alliance with some other indigenous power of Northern India on behalf of his nation and fight the English. Clive had to undertake an expedition against the French party and for this purpose he sent a detachment under the command of Major (afterwards the well-known General Sir Eyre) Coote, consisting of 230 Europeans, three companies each of 100 Sepoys, 50 Lascars, and two field-pieces, both sixpounders. The detachment left Murshidabad on 6th July, 1757, sailing with their stores, ammunition, carriages, baggage and provisions in 40 boats.

Meer Jaffer was foolish enough to imagine that this expedition to Behar would he beneficial to him, for it would mean the ruin of Ram Narain. To gain his object he and his friends industriously circulated all sorts of stories against that Hindu Governor of Behar. It was given out that Ram Narain had been intriguing with the Nawab Vizier of Oude with the intention of making himself independent of Meer Jaffer's government; and it was

therefore that he allowed the French party to cross the frontier of his province and reach the territory of Oude in safety.

When Coote reached Patna the French party had already left Behar. On the 25th July, when he was only seven miles distant from Patna, he received a letter from Ram Narain

"apologizing for the escape of the French party, and imputing it to the want of timely notice from Meer Jaffer."*

He at the same time sent a deputation of his principal officers to Major Coote, who

"informed him that Ram Narain had returned only two days before from an expedition against two disobedient chiefs of Moy and Sader, whose districts lay about 30 miles south-east of Patna ; that immediately on his return he had proclaimed Meer Jaffer Nabob of Bengal, Behar and Orissa ; that he had sent forward 2000 of his troops, horse and foot, in pursuit of M. Law, and that he had disbanded the greatest part of the rest."†

There is no reason to suspect that Ram Narain was not sincere in his professions. But Coote was made to understand by the interested partisans of Meer Jaffer,

"that the French party might easily have been stopped,

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* Orme, Vol II, p. 190 (Madras Edition).

† *Ibid*, p. 191.

if Ram Narain had so willed : that on hearing of the death of Surajah Dowlah, he had sent to Sujah Dowlah, the neighbouring and powerful subah of Oude, proposing to render himself independent of Bengal, if Sujah Dowlah would assist him with his forces, and requesting him to protect the French party on the frontiers, until it might be necessary to recall them to Patna ; that Sujah Dowla encouraged his views, but was prevented by events, which more immediately concerned himself, from marching with his army into Bahar. They likewise asserted that Ram Narain had consulted his confidents on the means of destroying the English detachment. This information determined the Major to proceed with all expedition to the frontiers of Oude."*

Of course, there was no convincing evidence of all these allegations against Ram Narain. But all these stories were invented to deprive him of the governorship of Behar. So there is no wonder that Coote

"on the 12th [August] received a letter from Colonel Clive, instructing him, as a scheme of Meer Jaffier's, to return to Patna, and endeavour, in concert with Mahmud Ally Cawn (brother of Meer Jaffer) to wrest the government from Ram Narain."†

Coote returned to Patna, but with the forces at his command it was not possible for him to

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* *Ibid*, pp. 191-192.

† *Ibid*, p. 193.

wrest the government from Ram Narain. The latter also received information from his friends at Murshidabad of the instructions sent to Major Coote. As a shrewd man of the world, he considered prudence to be the better part of valor and so tried to appease Coote and the partisans of Meer Jaffer. On the 22nd August a conference was held in his palace to discuss and reconcile all differences. On that occasion, Ram Narain solemnly denied all the charges brought against him,

"and produced a letter he had just received from Sujah Dowlah, which indicated no such intentions as were imputed to their correspondence ; he then said, it was true, that he had been attached to the late Nabob, because his fortunes had been raised by the princes of his family ; but now that Surajah Dowlah was no more, and none of his family remaining worthy or capable of the government, on whom should he so naturally wish to depend as on Meer Jaffer, whom their common patron, Ally Verdy, had raised so near his own person and dignity. He then called a brahmin, and, in the presence of his officers, and a crowd of attendants, solemnly swore allegiance and fidelity to Meer Jaffer, aud friendship and good will to Meer Cossim and Mahmud Amy. The two brothers returned the compliment, by taking an oath on the Koran that their heart was clear of all ill-will to Ram Narain, and should continue so. They then embraced him, and all the three Major Coote, as the mediator of this reconciliation."*

* *Ibid*, p. 194.

But notwithstanding this, Ram Narain was not well treated by Meer Jaffer, which will be related subsequently.

Major Coote and his detachment sailed from Patna on the 7th September in boats, which arrived at Murshidabad in seven days. The detachment was stationed in the factory at Cossimbazar.

On the 14th September, Clive left Murshidabad for Calcutta, leaving Watts, Manningham and Scrafton to transact the Company's affairs with the Nawab.

The Governor of Orissa stationed at Midnapore was also a Hindu, and his name was Ramramsing. Before Clive left Murshidabad, he had been summoned by Meer Jaffer to appear before him to settle the accounts of his province. Ramramsing was the head of the spies and so was a very shrewd man. He knew what the summoning of Meer Jaffer meant. So instead of appearing in person before Meer Jaffer, he sent his brother and nephew to Murshidabad, where of course they were confined. The step which he took was explained by Meer Jaffer to Clive as prompted by political expediency, since Ramramsing was alleged to have been intriguing with the French. Clive considered this explanation so satisfactory,

that he left Murshidabad without settling the affairs of Midnapore. But when he reached Calcutta Ramramsing wrote to him complaining of the conduct of Meer Jaffer in confining his brother and nephew and telling him that he had collected a large army consisting of 2000 horse and 5000 foot, and was in a position to defy the authority of the new Nawab if the latter was foolish enough to send any troops to coerce or capture him, but that he was willing to pay a *muzzerana* of one lakh of rupees to Meer Jaffer and even to pay his respects to him in person, if Clive would stand as mediator and warrant his safety. This Clive did most willingly and recommended Meer Jaffer to be reconciled to Ramramsing.

Of the province of Purneah Ogulsing had been appointed Governor by Siraj-ud-dowla after the death of his cousin Shaukat Jung. Meer Jaffer was desirous to replace Ogulsing by a Muhammadan favorite of his. Of course the Hindu Governor would not suffer himself to be displaced without resistance, and so had taken up arms against Meer Jaffer.

A detachment under Coddum Hussein, whom Meer Jaffer had intended for the governorship of that province, was sent to coerce Ogulsing. Writes Orme :

"The rebels, more dispirited by the approach of the English troops than the appearance of the Nabab's, quitted their entrenchments, which were strong, and dispersed before they were attacked. Soon after Ogulsing was taken prisoner, on which all the other officers either submitted or fled the country; and in less than a fortnight, by the 9th of December, Coddum Hussein was in quiet possession of the government."*

The new Nawab attributed these insurrections to the machinations of Rai Durlabh, whom it was now his intention to destroy. But that Hindu chief, not lacking in resources, assembled his force, and would no longer visit the Nawab. Through the mediation of Mr. Watts, however, an interview between the Nawab and Rai Durlabh was arranged on the 17th of October, when reconciliation was brought about by each swearing oblivion of former distrusts, and future friendship.

By the advice of Clive Ramramsingh came to Calcutta to see him, when through his mediation, the brother and nephew of Ramramsingh were released and the latter himself given the guarantee of his appointment. There were disquieting rumors from Behar to the effect that the Nawab Vizier of Oude had been requested by letters from the widow of Ally Verdy to march and join Ram Narain against Meer Jaffer.

* Vol. II, p. 275 (Madras Edition of 1861).

It was, therefore, considered necessary by the new Nawab to march his troops into that province. In this expedition Clive also joined him. Meer Jaffer was fully determined to deprive Ram Narain of the government of Patna. But it was not at that time the interest of the English to accede to his determination. To quote Orme :

"The Nabob's intention to remove Ram Narain, in order to give the government of Patna to one or other of his more immediate dependants, would inevitably be productive of long disturbance and confusion ; for it could not be doubted that Ram Narain, knowing the Nabob's enmity to him, would, on the approach of the army, offer any terms to Sujah Dowlah for his assistance, unless prevented by assurances he could rely on, that it was not intended to displace him."*

Consequently, Clive had to play the role of a mediator and patch differences between Meer Jaffer and Ram Narain and to give the latter necessary assurances that he would not be deprived of the governorship of Behar. A durbar at Patna was held on the 23rd February, 1758, when Meer Jaffer appointed his son, Meeran, Nawab of Patna —an appointment which was merely nominal— and Ram Narain as deputy to Meeran in the Nawabship ; for this favour he exacted from Ram Narain the sum of seven lacks of Rupees.

* Vol. II, p. 277.

For over four months the troops were in the field, without firing a single shot. Writes Orme :—

"Thus ended this political campaign, in which an army of 50,000 men had marched 300 miles out of their own province, and continued four months in the field, without firing a musket; but produced the full accomplishment of all that Clive intended..."*

Clive, of course, did not forget that he was the servant of a company of merchants. To further the interests of his masters, he forced the Nawab to grant the monopoly of the farm of saltpetre to the English Company. All the saltpetre then in use was made in the country above Patna. The Company was benefited immensely by the grant of the monopoly.

Clive returned to Murshidabad by the middle of May, 1758. But the Nawab returned some days afterwards. The Nawab was not a happy man. His voluntary embrace of the English merchants was proving to him to be something like that of a python. He did not know the state of the treasury of Murshidabad when he was entangled in the conspiracy so deftly woven by the English. He had promised large sums to individual Englishmen as well as to their Company for their help in

* Vol. II, p. 283.

making him ascend the *musnad* of the Nawabs of Bengal. When he succeeded in his object, he found the treasury was not so full as he had imagined and so he was unable to pay the English what he had promised them.* Meer Jaffer had paid enormous sums to Clive, which made that heaven-born general declare before the Parliamentary Committee in 1772, that "the Nawab's generosity had made his fortune easy." The Nawab had thought that Clive having been bribed so profusely would stand as his friend and exert his influence to release him from the further payment of the sums he had promised to the Company of foreign merchants. He thought that Clive and his compatriots would forego their monetary claims, a great part of which he had of course paid, but the remainder he was unable to satisfy because the

* "The scantiness of the Bengal treasury was most unexpected, as well as most painful news, to the English, who had been accustomed to a fond and literal belief of Oriental exaggeration on the subject of Indian riches. With great difficulty were they brought to admit so hateful a truth. Finding at last that more could not be obtained, they consented to receive one half of the moneys immediately, and to accept the rest by three equal payments in three years."

Mille's History, vol. III, p. 135 (5th Edition).

Murshidabad treasury had been now drained of its hoarded wealth and the revenues were not such as after all the necessary state demands to leave enough to pay the English what they claimed as their reward for their treachery to Siraj. To make matters worse for Meer Jaffer, his new friends were the direct cause of the decrease of his revenue; for they engaged in the trade of those articles which had been a source of revenue to the Nawabs of Bengal and as such had been prohibited to Europeans of all nations. Thus wrote Orme :—

"but as it is the nature of man to err with great changes of fortune, many, not content with the undisputed advantages accruing from the revolution, immediately began to trade in salt and other articles, which had hitherto been prohibited to all Europeans; and Meer Jaffer complained of these encroachments within a month after his accession, which, although checked for the present, were afterwards renewed, and at last produced much more mischief than even disinterested sagacity could have foreseen."*

But the natives of England, like persons of other European nations, had not come to India for the sake of pilgrimage or to recruit their health. *£. s. d.* was their trinity. Gold was their god, for they were all Mammon-worshippers. Such being

* Vol. II, p. 189.

the case, it was impossible for the Nawab to expect that Clive and his compatriots would release him from paying a single farthing less than the amount he had been forced to promise them. In vain did he plead that his treasury had been drained of its accumulated wealth. In vain did he protest against the English merchants injuring the revenues of his country by engaging in the trade of the prohibited articles. In vain did he refer to the wretched condition of his poverty-stricken subjects, and to his troops being in heavy arrears for want of funds. But Clive and his compatriots were inexorable. Like so many Shylocks, nothing would satisfy them except the stipulated pound of flesh in the shape of the large sums which Meer Jaffer had been forced to promise them. When the Nawab made every preparation to march to Behar to coerce Ram Narain, Clive would not join him unless he was paid the instalment of the stipulated sum then due to the Company.

The Nawab had to submit. The revenues of several districts were assigned to the English merchants. Says Malcolm in his Life of Clive (Vol. I, p. 338) :—

"A supply of money was procured for the extraordinary expenses of the army; the perwannah, or grant of lands

yielded to the Company, was passed in all its forms ; orders were issued for the immediate discharge of all arrears on the first six months of the Nabob's debt, and the revenues of Burdwan, Nuddea, and Hooghly assigned over for payment of the rest :—'So that,' says Clive, writing [8th February, 1758] to the Court of Directors, 'the discharge of the debt is now become independent of the Nabab, which precaution is become absolutely necessary, as his calls for money are greater than he can answer. Nothing but a total revolution in the government can well interrupt your payments'."

But this method of pleasing his foreign friends made the Nawab very unpopular with his tax-paying subjects. The latter saw that all the wealth of the Murshidabad treasury which had been accumulated during the course of several years from the taxes contributed by them was taken out of their country by a people of an alien race and creed, thus impoverishing their land. Writes the historian Orme :—

"..... the committee by the 6th of July (1757) received, in coined silver, 7,271,666 rupees. This treasure was packed up in 700 chests, and laden in 100 boats, which proceeded under the care of soldiers to Nudiah ; from whence they were escorted by all the boats of the squadron and many others, proceeding with banners displayed and music sounding, of a triumphal procession,..... Never before did the English nation at one time obtain such a prize in solid money ; for it amounted (in the mint) to 800,000 pounds sterling."*

* Vol. II, pp. 187-188. (Madras reprint of 1861).

The same author has described the discontent which the connection of Meer Jaffer with the English produced in the minds of his subjects. He writes :—

"Meer Jaffer had many relations ; and not only they, but all others who were his adherents or dependants before his accession to the Nabobship, thought they had the best right to partake of the change of his fortunes ;.....*But the donations to the English had exhausted the treasury*,..... Some money had been distributed amongst the army of the government, but much less than they expected ; and their discontent acquired presumption by the complaints of the whole populace of Muxadavad, who had beheld with detestation the gold and silver of the capital ostentatiously carried away by foreigners."*

There was no liberty of action left to Meer Jaffer, who was being treated as a mere puppet by Clive.

".....when tampared with to approve changes in the army and administration, which Jaffer wished to make in order to gratify his own favourites, Clive let him understand that he would permit none, as deeming them dangerous to the public tranquillity,.....Jaffer felt these restraints with abomination, which turned his head to notions of emancipating himself from the ascendance of the English."†

Then his troops were discontented for want of

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* *Ibid*, p. 195.

† *Ibid*, p. 196.

pay and he was not in a position to satisfy their claims. No wonder that he had become disgusted with his new Christian friends and is reported to have told one of his favourites,

"that if a French force should come into the province, he would assist them, unless the English released him from all their claims of money, territory, and exemptions."*

Of course, of all peoples, the English in his territory whose trinity was L. S.d, would have been the last to "release him from all their claims of money, territory, and exemptions."

Disgusted as Meer Jaffer had become with the English, he would have no doubt intrigued with the French, had there been any capable man and powerful colony belonging to that nation in Bengal. But with the capture of Chandernagore and the flight of M. Law and his party it was quite impossible for the Nawab to have received any succour from the French. Under these circumstances it is not quite impossible that he might have turned for aid to the Dutch, whose affairs were still in a flourishing condition in Bengal. The Dutch expedition to Bengal will be mentioned presently, but before doing so it is necessary to refer to what

* *Ibid*, p. 356.

led Meer Jaffer to throw himself again into the arms of the English and solicit their help.

The heir-apparent to the Mogul Emperor of Delhi, who held the nominal title of the Soubadar of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, to make good his claim to those provinces was marching with a large army and had actually reached the frontiers of Behar. Meer Jaffer was alarmed at the news of the approach of the Mogul prince. His troops whose pay was much in arrears, could not be relied on to fight against the Shah-Zada, as that prince was called. He appealed to Clive for help. With a strong force Clive immediately marched towards Patna, the Nawab's son, Meeran, also accompanying him. The Hindu Governor of Behar, Ram Narain, with specious promises and small presents, amused the prince and kept him from attacking his capital. But when the forces under Clive and Meeran arrived, then there was some fighting. Regarding this expedition to Behar, Clive wrote to one Mr. Spencer as follows :—

"The King's son, who, about a year ago, escaped out of the Vizier's hands, has been ever since fishing in troubled waters; he has been with the Rohillas, the Jauts, the Mahrattas, and Patans; and, about three months ago, fled for protection to Sujah-u-Dowlah, the Nawab of Oude, a mortal enemy to the Vizier, and was received by him with great respect. He sent his brother-in-law, Mahommed

Kooli Khan, with five thousand horse, into these parts, in hopes of effecting a revolution: and, indeed, the name of the King's eldest son was so great, that as soon as he entered the province, he was joined from all parts; and, by the time of his arrival before Patna, his army was forty thousand strong. The ruler of this place being entirely in the English interest, what with small presents and negociation, delayed the attack of the city for some time, but on the 23rd of March [1759] the fighting began, and lasted till the 4th of April, when our advanced guard arrived within four coss of the city, upon which the Shah Zada and his forces retired with the utmost precipitation, and are now getting much faster out of the province than they came in. We shall continue following them to the bank of the Caramnassa. I hope to secure the peace of these provinces for one year longer at least, by which time the whole of the Nabob's treaty will be concluded.

"The enemy made several vigorous attacks upon the city, and were once in possession of two bastions, but were driven off with great slaughter; they have certainly lost a great many men. M. Law, with his small party, joined the King's son on the day of their retreat, but could not prevail upon him to make another attack".*

Clive was a favourite son of fortune and, whether he fought any battle or not, good luck never seemed to have deserted him in India. The historian Mill truly wrote :—

This was a fortunate expedition for Clive. un-

* Malcolm's *Life of Clive*, Vol. I, pp. 411-412.

bounded was the gratitude of Jaffier, that after obtaining for his defender the rank of an Omrah of the Empire, he bestowed upon him, under the title of Jaghire, the whole of the revenue or rent which the Company, in quality of Zemindar, were bound to pay for the territory which they held round Calcutta. The grant amounted to the enormous sum of 30,000£ per annum. 'Clive's Jaghire' is an expression of frequent recurrence, and of considerable weight in the history of India"*

But another Christian writer, Mr. J. Talboys Wheeler, attributes the grant of this jaghire to Clive in order to propitiate him. Says Wheeler :—

"Indeed it might be conjectured that Clive got his jaghire, not because he had defeated the Shahzada, but because Meer Jaffier was in mortal terror lest Clive should punish him for his intrigues with the Dutch. It seems far more likely that the jaghire was given as a peace-offering than as an act of gratitude."†

But Talboys Wheeler is a discredited historian and his Judgment is seldom, if ever, sound. The complicity of Meer Jaffer in the Dutch expedition is more than doubtful and yet Wheeler does not hesitate to write that it "was beyond all doubt."

Whether Meer Jaffer granted the jaghire to Clive out of gratitude or it was extorted from him

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* Vol. III., p. 203 (5th Edition).

† Early Records of British India, p. 266.

will always remain one of those historical mysteries which can not be cleared up from contemporary records. Far our own part we are inclined to believe that it was extorted from Meer Jaffer by Clive.

We have said before that considering the manner in which Meer Jaffer was being treated by his English friends, it was not impossible for him to have intrigued with the Dutch and asked their aid against the English. In August 1759, a Dutch fleet of boats arrived at the river Hugly from Batavia and was proceeding up the river to the Dutch settlement at Chinsura. Clive was informed of this. The two Christian nations, *viz.*, the Dutch and the English, were not at war at that time, and so Clive was in a predicament and did not know how to act. However, he took all the responsibilities of a war upon himself and decided to fight the Dutch. He prevented the advance of the Dutch fleet to Chinsurah and it was ultimately destroyed. The Anglo-Indians of those days, owing to their guilty conscience, were not slow in charging Meer Jaffer with having invited the Dutch fleet to Bengal. But from what Malcolm writes on the subject in his Life of Clive there is no reason to suspect the complicity of Meer Jaffer in the Dutch expedition. He writes :—

"The Dutch at Chinsura had, like others, suffered from Siraj-ud-Dowlah, who had compelled them to pay a fine of five lacs of rupees. This and other oppressive acts made them rejoice in his downfall, and they addressed to Clive a letter of congratulation on his success in dethroning that prince. Nevertheless they did not recognise Meer Jaffer as Subah of Bengal; and the consequence was so hostile a feeling towards them in the mind of that prince, that it required the continual good offices of Clive to preserve terms betwixt them. This was not easy; for their not recognising him was a cause of just and frequent irritation to Meer Jaffer. Clive notices the subject in a letter [2nd October, 1758] to the Dutch governor, written in answer to one full of complaints.

" 'I am well acquainted,' he observes, 'with your attachment to the English, and the service you have at all times been ready to show them; but give me leave to observe, Sir, that good offices have always been reciprocal between the two nations: and, indeed, this is no more than we mutually owe each other, considering the close alliance and union of interests that have so long subsisted between us. It gives me, therefore, much concern that you should do me the injustice to reproach me with being in any shape accessory to the obstruction which the Subah has thought proper to lay upon your trade. I have, indeed, heard him make frequent complaints of the ill behaviour of your government towards him, and was really much amazed at his patience, in putting up so long with indignities which you would not have ventured to offer either to Mohait Jang [Aliverdi Khan, the predecessor of Suraj-u-Dowlah] or Suraj-u-Dowlah. I shall not pretend to inquire into your

reasons for not acknowledging Meer Jaffer, in the same manner as the preceding Subahs have always been, more especially as you cannot be ignorant that he has received his sunnud from the Mogul; but, for my own part, I cannot conceive how you and your Council will be able to exculpate yourselves to your superiors for the present stoppage of their trade, since it appears evident to me that you have brought it upon yourselves, by your disrespect to a person of his high station."*

It is not necessary to make further extracts from Malcolm's work. Clive and several other Anglo-Indians who had served in India were examined before the Parliamentary Committee of 1772, on the subject of the Dutch expedition and Meer Jaffer's alleged complicity in it. From their evidence, no one, unless he is biassed against Meer Jaffer, can be convinced that the Nawab invited the Dutch to Bengal. What seems probable was that the natives of Holland seeing how the French influence had been totally extirpated in Bengal and how that race was faring ill in Southern India at the hands of the English, thought it an act of prudence to strengthen their factory at Chinsura by sending there additional troops and ships. Knowing also the feelings which Meer Jaffer and his son Meeran entertained

* Vol. II, pp. 70-72.

towards the English, they perhaps counted on their help in the event of their armament reaching Bengal. But if they ever entertained such hopes, they were very sadly disappointed when they arrived at Bengal. The Nawab's troops joined the English in attacking and defeating the Dutch.

By this defeat inflicted on the Dutch, the English had no more European rivals to fear in Bengal. So their political influence became more powerful than ever. Writes Mr. Mill ;—

"After this heavy blow the Dutch, to prevent their total expulsion from Bengal, were contented to put themselves in the wrong, by paying the expenses of the war ; and the irregularity of his interference made Clive well pleased to close the dispute, by restoring to the Dutch their ships, with all the treasure and effects. The agreement with the Dutch was ratified on the 5th of December [1759] ....."*

Clive had been now a little over three years in Bengal and, by the most unfair means imaginable, he benefited himself, his masters and his compatriots at the expense of the Nawab and the people of that province. All those objects for which he left Madras in October, 1756 had been now accomplished. The revolution which the

* Vol. III, p. 205 (5th Edition).

English merchants in Madras desired in Bengal had been brought about by the instrumentality of Clive. The large and unprecedented sums which the traitor Meer Jaffer had been compelled to promise to the English for their help in seating him on the musnad of Bengal had been now paid and many other concessions to the Company's trade in Bengal extorted from the Nawab. So Clive now meditated return to England and by the display of his wealth to outshine the aristocracy of his native land and pass for an Indian Nawab. He resigned the Government of Bengal and sailed for England from Calcutta early in February, 1760.

It has been said before that the battle of Plassey gained by the machinations of Clive and his other compatriots did not signify the conquest of Bengal by the English. It was not like the battle of Hastings, which placed the Norman yoke on the necks of the natives of England. Bengal was never conquered by any European nation. But Clive after staying in that province for over two years and finding how simple-minded and confiding the princes and people of that province were, and therefore how easily they could be imposed upon, cheated and hypnotised by any unscrupulous nation of Europe, thought that that province could be

brought without any difficulty under the direct control of England. The letter which he wrote, dated Calcutta, 7th January, 1759, submitting his thoughts on the subject to Mr. William Pitt, the Prime Minister of England, is so important that it is given below *in extenso*.

"The great revolution that has been effected here by the success of the English arms, and the vast advantages gained to the Company by a treaty concluded in consequence thereof, have, I observe, in some measure engaged the public attention; but more may yet in time be done, if the Company will exert themselves in the manner the importance of their present possessions and future prospects deserves. I have represented to them in the strongest terms the expediency of sending out and keeping up constantly such a force as will enable them to embrace the first opportunity of further aggrandising themselves; and I dare pronounce, from a thorough knowledge of the country government, and of the genius of the peoples acquired from two years' application and experiences, that such an opportunity will soon occur. The reigning Subah.....is advanced in years; and his son is so cruel, worthless a young fellow, and so apparently an enemy to the English, that it will be almost unsafe trusting him with the succession. So small a body as two thousand Europeans will secure us against any apprehensions from either the one or the other; and, in case of their daring to be troublesome, enable the Company to take the sovereignty upon themselves.

"There will be the less difficulty in bringing about such

an event, as the natives themselves have no attachment whatever to particular princes ;.....

"But so large a sovereignty may possibly be an object too extensive for a mercantile Company ; and it is to be feared they are not of themselves able, without the nation's assistance, to maintain so wide a dominion.....It is well worthy consideration, that this project may be brought about without draining the mother country, as has been too much the case with our possessions in America. A small force from home will be sufficient, as we always make sure of any number we please of black troops,.....I shall only further remark, that I have communicated it to no other person but yourself ; nor should I have troubled you, Sir, but from a conviction that you will give a favourable reception to any proposal intended for the public good."*

Clive had also been offered by the Mogul Emperor the post of Dewan, or Collector of the revenue of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, one whose duty it was, after paying all the official salaries, to remit the surplus to the Imperial Treasury at Delhi. But Clive declined the post, for he did not like at that time to excite the jealousy of Meer Jaffer.

William Pitt also did not see his way to second the proposal submitted to him by Clive, for, in his opinion, bringing any portion of India under the direct control of England might endanger the

* Malcolm's *Life of Clive*, Vol, II. pp. 119 *et seq.*

public liberties. Pitt must be considered to have been a very farseeing statesman, and if his decision had been adhered to, India would have been saved the calamities and miseries which she has been suffering ever since the administration of her affairs has been transferred from the Company to the Crown.

In Clive was combined both the civil and military administration of the Company's affairs in Bengal. But on his departure, Mr. Holwell, as a temporary measure, was appointed Governor of Bengal till the arrival of Mr. Henry Vansittart from Madras in July, 1760. Colonel Calliaud was appointed to the supreme military command of the Company's troops in Bengal.

Towards the close of the year 1759 a storm was again brewing on the frontiers of Behar. It is said that the injustice of Meeran to some of the officers of considerable rank and influence in the Nawab's army before he departed from Patna the preceding year, drove them to conspiracy against Meer Jaffers' government and made them invite the Shahzada to invade Bengal once more.

It would be remembered that Cuddam Hoosain had been made two years previously the Nawab of Poornea. But he proved more troublesome to Jaffer than any one of the Hindu Governors whom

it was his policy to destroy. Cuddam Hoossain did not pay the stipulated tribute to Jaffer and so the latter determined to destroy him. The Nawab of Poornea therefore as a measure of self-preservation had to take the field, and was expected to join with his 6000 seasoned troops the standard of the Mogul Prince.

It was necessary to stop the menaced invasion without any delay. So Colonel Calliaud at the head of a large force left Calcutta and arrived at Moorshidabad on the 26th December, 1759. Here Clive also joined him on the 6th January 1760 in order to introduce Calliaud to the Nawab. The stay of Clive at Moorshidabad was for a week or so, when he left for Calcutta to make his necessary preparations for the voyage home. Colonel Calliaud also left Moorshidabad for the front on the 18th January, being joined by a large detachment of the Nawab's army under the command of Meeran.

There would not have been any unnecessary delay for the Moorshidabad troops in reaching Patna but for the interruption they experienced in their March due to the encampment of the Nawab of Poornea on the left bank of the river between Moorshidabad and Patna. Cuddam Hoosein asked Calliaud for the English Company

to engage for his security; and on that condition he professed a desire to remain loyal to Meer Jaffer. Colonel Calliaud in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1772 said, that Cuddam Hussain

"had not declared his intentions openly; but said, he was ready and willing to obey the Nabob's orders in everything, to pay all the revenues that were due, and to prove himself a faithful subject and servant. It was necessary to get more than these general assurances from him; he was at the head of a large body of troops; and as the affairs of Patna were then situated, it was dangerous to leave such a force in his rear, without knowing whether he could trust them. That he endeavoured to settle matters between him and the Nabob as well as he could; he would accept of no mediation but his; he would not see the Young Nabob (Meeran), but took his security, that if he faithfully discharged all the demands the old Nabob had on him for revenues due, that he would endeavour to get the Nabob's consent that he should remain in his command. That this kept him seven days."*

While the Shahzada was on his march on Behar and had actually crosssd the river Caramnassa, which formed the Western boundary of that province, news reached him of the murder of his father, Alam Geer. So he proclaimed himself as the Emperor of Hindustan and conferred the title

* *First Report*, 1772, p. 158.

of Vizier on the Nawab of Oude. With a large army which he was able now to collect by virtue of his being now Emperor, he advanced towards Patna. The Governor of the province was still Ram Narain, who, (to quote Colonel Calliaud),

" had a considerable army under his command, besides a battalion of our Sepoys, that was left in garrison at Patna by Lord Clive, who joined him upon that occasion, and he marched out of the City with these forces.—That the witness repeatedly wrote to him, and pressed him not to come to an action, but to wait his arrival, and had no doubt then of success against the prince.—That however he chose to follow his own advice ; he engaged the prince ; two of his principal jemadars deserted him during the action, he was totally defeated and severely wounded, 400 of our *Sepoys* marched to his assistance, when he was surrounded by the enemy, saved him, and were cut to pieces themselves, with three European gentlemen, two officers, and one gentleman, a volunteer.—That the remainder of the battalion secured his retreat into Patna, which the Shahzada immediately invested. That he received the news of his defeat the 11th of February, and marched with all the expedition in his power, such as obliged him on the 15th to raise the siege of Patna ; and on the 22nd the two armies met and engaged ; the detail of the action is very uninteresting : *That the Young Nabob (Meeran) followed quite a contrary disposition to the one he wanted him to make*, but that he saved him in imminent danger, and the enemy was totally routed. That the instant the engagement was over, the Young Nabob retired to his tent, on account of the wounds

he had received.—That the witness requested and conjured him to give him ever so small a body of cavalry, and with his *Europeans* and *Sepoys*, fatigued as they were, he would do his best to pursue the enemy, and clear the country of them, that he was deaf to all his entreaties—and his means of pursuit, with the handful of troops he was at the head of, fatigued beyond measure with the forced marches he had made to raise the seige, put it quite out of his power; besides, out of the six pieces of cannon which he had in the field, four broke down during the engagement, and some time was necessary to put those carriages in repair. That at length he persuaded the Nabob to leave the City of Patna on the 29th of February, and on the 2nd of March he received advice that the *Shah Zada* (the Prince) was in full march for the province of Bengal. That he had the advantage of a day's march of our army, with an army composed almost entirely of Cavalry, unincumbered with baggage. That on the 7th he got within 10 miles of him; he marched off in the night, and took his way across the mountains, to enter the province of Bengal in another part; a road through which no army before had ever marched; but through which however the witness made a shift to follow him, and on the 4th of April joined the old Nabob, who was in the field. That, on the 6th, with their united armies, they got so near the Prince, that he proposed to the Nabob that he would give him a body of cavalry, and some spare horses to assist him in carrying the Europeans, who were exhausted and spent with fatigue, and he would attack the prince in camp that night. This he would not comply with, and the next day he came up however with the rear of their army, a river only dividing them; that he

again sent repeated messages to the Nabob, to beg he would only march a body of cavalry, to keep the enemy in play, until he could come up with his infantry; but this he would never consent to, and the enemy marched off unmolested; and in two days after took the same road into the Province of Behar: That afraid of the safety of Patna, which he knew was destitute of troops, he detached Captain Knox, with 200 Europeans, a battalion of Sepoys, and two pieces of cannon, to march with all the expedition he possibly could for the relief of Patna, if the Prince should beseige it: He came in time to save the city; on which the Prince had made two general assaults, and was preparing for a third, when Captain Knox arrived with some part of his detachment, and obliged him to raise the siege a second time. That he remained in camp with the old Nabob, and his son, until the 16th of May, when again he marched with his son against the Nabob of Purnea, whom the old Nabob had endeavoured to bring back to his duty, but which the other refused, and would comply with none of his terms, broke his promise with the witness, and was setting out with an intention of joining the Prince. On the 22nd he again reached Patna, and crossed the river there; but before that happened, Captain Knox, whom he had ordered to march from Patna across the river, and endeavour to stop the progress of the Nabob of Purnea, so that we might get up with him, had taken a strong and judicious post, and was attacked by the Nabob's whole army and maintained his post with great bravery. That they joined in pursuit of the enemy, who was retreating as fast as they could. On the 27th he came up with them: the young Nabob with his Army in the rear two miles; the connonading began between the two armies;

he soon seized their cannon, dislodged them from all their posts ; and would have obtained a complete victory, if foot could have overtaken cavalry, of which his army was chiefly composed ; that he had none of his own, and the Nabob would not send him one horseman ; that they continued pursuing the Nabob of Purnea, until the 3rd of July ; they were to have continued their march next day, when between one and two o'clock in the morning Mr. Lushington came into his tent with a Harcara (or Messenger) and told him the young Nabob [Meeran] was dead ; that it would be difficult to express his surprise, which was followed by his enquiries, to know how this accident had happened, which he was told was by a flash of lightning, as he lay on his bed. In a few minutes after, his Duan (or Prime Minister) came to the witness in the greatest distress, assuring him that if some thing was not immediately done, the consequence would be the plunder of the camp, and the Nabob's troops marching off wherever thought proper : There was no way to prevent this accident, and the confusion which must follow, but to endeavour to keep his death a secret from his army, that we might gain time to bring over some of the Jamutdars of the greatest consequence, and attach them to our interest : That they sent for one or two of those he thought he could most confide in, told them the story and requested them, as a mark of regard they had for their old master, to continue faithful in the service of the old Nabob, and to bring over, by degrees, as many of the other Jamutdars as they could, to this way of thinking ; that he, on his part, would use all his endeavours with the old Nabob, that all the arrears of pay, and all the just demands they might have, should be settled to their satisfaction. That we then determined, that the

army should march back towards Patna ; and give out that the Young Nabob was ill ; this was performed in seven days, and during this whole time, except the people who were entrusted with the secret, the Army had no knowledge of the Young Nabob's death. The witness said, this was the narrative of his campaign ; that soon after his arrival at Patna, about the 28th or 29th of July, or the beginning of August, he received advice of Mr. Vansittart's arrival at Calcutta, as Governor."*

We have considered it proper to let Colonel Calliaud speak for himself about the campaign which he conducted against the Mogul Emperor, instead of giving an abstract or compilation of it from various writers on the subject. It will be noticed that Calliaud does not call the Moghul Prince Emperor but merely Shahzada. The fact should not be lost sight of that on the occasion of his second invasion of Behar, the Mogul prince was no longer Shahzada, but the real Emperor of Hindustan. Regarding this prince's first invasion of Behar in 1759 when he was Shahzada and not Emperor of Hindustan, and when Clive proceeded to fight him, Mill wrote :—

"The hardihood of Clive was seldom overcome by scruples. Yet the Emperor Alumgeer was legitimate sovereign of Bengal ; and had undoubted right to appoint his eldest

* First Report, 1772, pp. 158-159.

son to be his deputy in the government of that province. To oppose him was undisguised rebellion."

Then in a footnote, Mr. Mill added :

"The prince, Holwell assures us [Memorial, p. 2], repeatedly offered to grant the English their own terms, if they would assist him in recovering his rights. On what side policy, whether on that which Clive rejected, or that which he chose, is a more subtle inquiry."

In criticising the above views of Mill, H. H. Wilson wrote :—

"It was not a question of policy, but one of good faith. By the treaty with Mir Jaffer, as well as by the nature of their connection with him,—the English were pledged to assist him against all enemies whatever, and few of the governors of the provinces would have scrupled to consider the Emperor as an enemy if he had sought to disposses them of their subahs. Even, however, if the theory of obedience to a monarch, who at the very seat of Empire was no longer his own master, could be urged with any show of reason ; it would not be applicable in the present instance, for the Shah-Zada was not appointed by the Emperor to be his deputy in Bengal, and as Clive pleaded to the Prince himself, no communication of his movements or purposes had been made from Delhi. On the contrary, the Prince was there treated as a rebel to his father. He could not plead, therefore, the Emperor's authority for his incursion, and no other pretext could have afforded him the semblance even of right." *

* Vol. III, p. 202.

Although for our own part we are inclined to share the opinion of Mill rather than that of Wilson, yet even if we assume for the sake of argument, that the views of the latter are sound regarding Clive's opposing the prince's first incursion, there can be no doubt that on the occasion of his second incursion in 1760, "to oppose him was undisguised rebellion." He was now the Emperor of Hindustan, and, as such, every mark of allegiance and fidelity should have been shown to him hy his viceroys and subjects. It was perhaps this consideration of loyalty to the Emperor which induced Meeran not to assist Calliaud in the manner which that commandant expected of him and which made him complain so bitterly against the Young Nabob. But it was not the interest of the English to suffer Meer Jaffer and his son to be faithful and loyal servants to their legitimate sovereign. It was probably on this account that they were at this period meditating to bring about another revolution in Bengal and depose Meer Jaffer from its musnad.

Meeran was the eldest son of Meer Jaffer and as such according to the custom of all nations he possessed the best title to succeed his father. In any revolution in Bengal which the English

were meditating to bring about, it would have been inconvenient to ignore the just claims of Meeran and place an outsider on the throne of Bengal. At such a juncture the death of the Young Nabob would naturally create an impression that he was the victim of some foul play. Of course, it was given out that he had been killed accidentally by a flash of lightning. But we share the opinion of those who suspect that Meeran was assassinated, and perhaps Colonel Calliaud had a hand in his assassination. Meeran was a thorn in the side of the English. Just a month after his death, Mr. Holwell in his address to Mr. Vansittart wrote :—

"A party was soon raised at the Durbar, headed by the Nabob's son, *Miran*, and Rajah *Raagebullav*, who were daily planning schemes to shake off their dependence on the *English*, and continually urging to the Nabob, that until this was effected his government was a Name only :"*

So his mysterious death, which was not properly investigated, must excite the suspicion that it was due to some foul play on the part of those whom he looked upon as his enemies.

The Second Revolution in Bengal.

Now the English in less than three years time

* *First Report.* 1772, Appendix 9, p. 225.

after the assassination of Siraj-ud-dowla gained all, nay more than all, the advantages which they had imagined such an occurrence would secure them. The terms of the Treaty, they had ratified with Meer Jaffer, whom they had with the foulest means conceivable helped to gain the musnad of Bengal, were executed to the very letter by that traitor. They could not with any show of decency extort more advantages from that Nabob. Of course they did not possess any conscience or any sense of honor or honesty. So they thought it would be advantageous to them to kick the man whom they had made use of in gaining their ulterior ends and who having now seen through their designs would not perhaps consent any longer to be a tool in their hands to oppress his own subjects.

Considerations like the above, must have prompted the English to bring about a second revolution in Bengal. It would seem that from the very day that Mr. Holwell assumed the governorship of Bengal as a temporary measure from Clive, he was bent on effecting a revolution in that province. This man had been presented by Meer Jaffer with a very large sum of money to which of course he had no moral or legal claim. But such was his sense of gratitude

that he did not scruple to cut the throat of his benefactor. He commenced intriguing with several persons in order to effect the revolution which was so dear to his heart. Colonel Calliaud was at that time in Behar, whither he had gone to oppose the advance of the Moghul Emperor into Bengal. To him Mr. Holwell wrote a letter dated 24th May 1760, on the subject of the proposed revolution. At that time that military officer did not approve of Mr. Holwell's scheme. In replying to the latter's letter, Colonel Calliaud wrote on 29th May 1760 from Camp at Balkissen's gardens :—

"Bad as the man may be, whose cause we now support, I cannot be of opinion, that we can get rid of him for a better without running the risk of much greater inconveniences attending on such a change, than those we now labour under.....We cannot in prudence neither, I believe, leave this revolution to chance ; we must in some degree be instrumental to bringing it about ; in such a case it is very possible we may raise a man to the diginity, just as unfit to govern, as little to be depended upon, and in short as great a rogue, as our Nabob ; but perhaps not so great a coward, nor so great a fool, and of consequence, much more difficult to manage. As to the injustice of supporting this man on account of his cruelties, oppressions, and of his being detested in his government, I see so little chance in this blessed country of finding a man endued with the opposite virtues, that I think we may put up with these vices with which we

have no concern, if in other matters we find him fittest for our purpose.

.....

"All we can wish to do is, not to suffer the Nabob to impose on us, and to check every beginning of an independence he may endeavour to assume; let us consult and improve on every occasion that offers, the honour and advantage of our employers, and the increase of their trade and credit; and not let them suffer any additional expense, on account of pursuing any plan, or supporting any system whatever. By acting thus, I think we cannot err; we run at least no risk, and I believe the Company's affairs may be conducted by us under this Subah, as much to their advantage and credit, as any other, whom a revolution may place in the government." *

But Colonel Calliaud afterwards changed his views and approved of the idea of bringing about a revolution in Bengal. When he appeared before the Parliamentary Committee of 1772, he was asked,

"What were his reasons for approving a revolution in September 1760, which he seemed to disapprove so strongly by the lettter he had read, dated in May? he said, he would, to the best of his recollection declare those motives, by stating some particulars of his situation at that time in the country. The ascendancy which Lord Clive had over the Nabob, which flowed from the Nabob from a sense of the favours he had received from Lord Clive, was, very soon

* *First Report*, 1772. p. 160.

after he came to the command, at an end. That the witness's constant unwearied attention, to keep up that confidence so necessary between them and the Nabob, was prevented by some very untoward circumstances. Mr. Holwell succeeded Lord Clive in the chair, only by virtue of his rank, in order of succession ; and the certainty of another Governor being soon appointed, was known to the whole country, and of course, that degree of respect which the Nabob would have had to a Governor in other circumstances was not paid to Mr. Holwell ; Mr. Holwell soon saw this, and resented it. The Nabob's exceeding weak and irresolute character, gave plenty of occasions for Mr. Holwell to find fault, and blame his measures ; That he felt them too, and observed them, but he thought that he did his duty best as a faithful servant to the Company, by acting the part of a mediator between them, and by softening, rather than irritating, the ill disposition that subsisted between them. That on this plan he acted throughout the whole course of Mr. Holwell's administration ; putting off by delays and sometimes with reasons, every approach to a change of system in that government, which, though in his own heart he adopted, and knew the necessity of, yet he was desirous to keep it off as long as he could, till the necessity of it might press so hard as to make it unavoidable. That when that letter he read was wrote, the Nabob's son was then alive ; his extraordinary death made a great change in the situation of affairs in that country. That Mr. Vansittart's arrival, and the confidence he had in his abilities and judgment, made him without reluctance adopt his plan ; he knew his motives ; they were honest and disinterested, as to himself, honourable and advantageous to his employers

and as such, as the necessity of the times, the particular situation at Bengal, the general state of the Company's affairs throughout India, have ever in his opinion vindicated the measures pursued.*"

When Mr. Vansittart arrived in Bengal to succeed Clive as its permanent Governor, the conspiracy against the Nawab became very active and assumed gigantic proportions. Mr. Holwell was of course the leader of the conspirators. In his address of 4th August 1760 to Mr. Vansittart and other members of the Select Committee of Fort William, he said :—

"As my health, and the consideration of other circumstances, will soon oblige me to request permission from the Board to resign the service, I beg leave previous to that step to accompany this short address with such remarks and memorials as may convey to the honourable the President (so lately arrived amongst us) a knowledge of the present state and situation of the Company's affairs, as they stand connected with, or dependant on, the Government of Bengal."

It is not necessary to make further extracts from this address, except the sentence which showed how jubilant Mr. Holwell was over the death of Meeran. He wrote :—

"However, the sudden death of the Nabob (if made a proper use of) seems to point out a middle way, in things

* *Ibid*, p. 161.

are not gone too far already, to admit of any other than the divesting this family of the Government altogether "

It was now convenient for the English to conspire against the Nawab, to divest him and his family of the Government of Bengal and to raise in his stead, a creature of their own. In Calcutta they held several secret meetings to properly hatch their plots. These meetings were held under the presidency of Mr. Vansittart, and the members were Colonel Calliaud, Messrs. William Brightwell Sumner, Joseph Zephaniah Holwell and William M'Gwire. These conspirators met very frequently in September 1760. In their meeting at Fort William, September the 11th, 1760, they delivered their "thoughts on the present state of affairs" as follows :—

"Our influence increasing from time to time since the revolution brought about by Colonel Clive, so have we been obliged to increase our force to support that influence. We have now more than a thousand Europeans, and five thousand sepoys, which, with the contingent expenses of an army, is far more than the revenues allotted for their maintenance. This deficiency was not so much attended to whilst the immediate sums stipulated by the treaty were coming in ; but these resources being now quite exhausted, and no supplies of money coming from Europe, it becomes immediately necessary to secure to the Company such an income as will bear them clear of charges, and bring in, besides, a

supply for the emergencies of their other settlements, and for providiug cargoes for loading home their ships.

.....

"It must therefore be proposed to the Nabob, to assign to the Company a much larger income, and to assign it in such a full and ample manner, by giving to the Company the sole right of such districts, as lay most convenient for our management ; that we may no longer be subject to the inconveniencies we experienced from the late Tuncaws, being orders only on a certain part of the revenues.—From the experienced weakness and unsteadiness of the Nabob himself, and the nature of those dependants who now rule him, and who by self-interested views must naturally oppose every increase of our power, as their own will of course be proportionably lessened ; it is to be supposed, that such a proposal would meet with all the difficulties that could possibly he thrown in our way. Not withstanding these difficulties, we will suppose we should have weight enough to overrule his counsellors, and to obtain his consent. We then just keep our present footing. We have a fund for paying our troops ; and those troops must be employed in the service of the Nabob ; .....

"The share of influence we now enjoy in these provinces, however great in appearance, does not carry with it those real advantages and weighty effects which are necessary not to leave that power in danger of being disputed, and of failing us at a time when we most want it ; and nothing is more probable than that period will happen on a peace. To prevent the evil consequences of this, there seems now to offer such an opportunity of securing to ourselves all we could wish in this respect, as likely may never happen

again; an opportunity that will give us both power and right.

"Another principal motive, that urges us to think of changing our system, is the want of money; a want that is not confined to ourselves alone, but on which greatly depend,

"The operations on the coast,

"The reduction of Pondicherry, and

"The provision of an investment for loading home the next year's ships at all the three presidencies."*

It will be seen from the above that no case was made out against the Nawab. Meer Jaffer was quite true to his engagements withthe servants of the Company. But it was the most sordid selfishness of the latter which prompted them to desire for a revolution and change Meer Jaffer for a subservient creature of their own. Necessity knows no law, and therefore to gain money, they were prepared to sacrifice Meer Jaffer. Writes Mr. Mill :—

"When Jaffier got possession of the Viceroyalty by the dethronement and death of his master Suraj-ad-dowla, and when the English leaders were grasping the advantages which the revolution placed in their hands, both parties, dazzled with first appearances, overlooked the consequences which necessarily ensued. The cupidity natural to mankind, and the credulity with which they believe what flatter their desires, made the English embrace, without deduction,

* First Report, 1772, pp. 228—229,

the exaggerations of Oriental rhetoric on the riches of India ; and believe that a country which they saw was one of the poorest, was nevertheless the most opulent upon the surface of the globe. The sums which had been obtained from Jaffier were now wholly expended. 'The idea of provision for the future,' to use the word of a Governor, 'seemed to have been lost in the apparent immensity of the sum stipulated for compensation of the Company's losses at Calcutta.' No rational foresight was applied, as the same observer remarks, to the increased expenditure which the new connexion with the government of the country naturally produced ; and soon it appeared that no adequate provision was made for it. 'In less than two years it was found necessary to take up money at interest, although large sums had been received besides for bills upon the Court of Directors.' The situation of Jaffier was deplorable from the first. With an exhausted treasury and exhausted country, and vast engagements to discharge, he was urged to the severest exactions ; ....."*

How to raise money to make both ends meet was the question with the English conspirators now. Again on the 15th September 1760, they met in secret conclave, when they considered "the difficulties on both sides."

"The great objects of our present deliberation are, first, the securing a fund of money for the present and future exigencies of this settlement, as well as the other two presidencies, no money being expected from Europe ; and,

* Vol, III pp. 213—214.

secondly, The putting an end to the disturbances fomented and kept up by the Shazaddah in several parts of these provinces. That the whole may be united under the Nabob, and he put under the more immediate influence of the Company, whose force is his chief support and dependence. By this means enabling us to join a large body of country troops to our own, to oppose any attempts of European or country powers.

"The question to be considered is, whether we can best arrive at these ends by following the present system of opposing the Shazaddah, or by proposing to him an alliance with the English, and the assistance of part of our forces to proceed with him to Delhi, and support him in his pretensions to the throne."

Then the conspirators mentioned the chief difficulties in following the system then in vogue as well as the second system proposed. They proceeded :

"The raising the sum wanted is a difficulty in both cases, almost unsurmountable. It certainly cannot be obtained without imposing on the Nabob forcibly, terms which of his own good will he never would come into. In favour of the change of system, it is to be said, that the means and resources of the country, from which the money must come, will be more capable of supplying it when the war is removed by the march of the Shazaddah to the Northword.

"Consequently those which we can prevail on to take part with us in this project, and to assist us in bringing the Nabob into it, will be more ready to advance money, upon the promise of holding the principal employments.

"And as on both sides there must be some kind of force or violence exerted over the Nabob's inclinations, it may be done with a better grace, as well as more effect, by means of orders from the Prince.

"The Committee therefore are of opinion, all circumstances considered, that the settlements here will be more secure with the forces that will remain here, if by joining our army to the Shazaddah, and marching with him to the Northward, we can put an end to all the inland trouble here, than in the present disposition of keeping that army at Patna, to make head against the Shazaddah, especially if we can procure such terms as will enable us to assemble on any occasion a large country force to co-operate with us here; and such terms, we doubt not, the Shazaddah will immediately offer."

So they unanimously resolved to enter into an alliance with the Shazaddah, and also to intrigue with Cassim Ally and Rai Durlabh.

"The president is accordingly desired to press Cassim Ally Cawn on the subject of our expenses, and our great distress for money, so as to draw from him some proposal of means for removing those difficulties; by which probably we may be able to form a judgment, whether he might not be brought to join, in this negotiation, and in procuring the Nabob's consent. There is another person here, Roydullub, who has been long under our protection; and whose attachment to the Company is not to be doubted. Through him it is thought this intention may best be opened to the Shazaddah, but as an interview between him and the president at this time, might look suspicious, and give an alarm to the Nabob

Mr. Holwell is desired to open the affair to him, and take his advice how best to manage."*

So Messrs. Vansittart and Holwell intrigued with Casssim Ally and Rai Durlabh and in the meeting of the Select Committee of Fort William, September 16, 1760, reported the conversation they had with the latter the previous night. Mr. Vansittart reported

"That without letting him know anything of our design, he had led him to make such declarations of his desire to have the rule over the Nabob, and the general management of the affairs of the province as amount almost to a proof of his readiness to act the part intended for him.

"After telling him much of our regard, and of our opinion of him as the fittest person for conducting the great affairs of the Bengal Government, I began to make him strong representations on the subject of the Company's expenses ;...

"In answer to this, Cassim Ally Cawn replied, that he had it not at present in his powers to provide in a proper manner for the supply of the Company. That if we could undertake to give him the general management of the country, by taking it out of the hands of those who are now interested with it by the Nabob, he would then make such assignment in favour of the Company, as should be perfectly to our satisfaction. ..... Cassim Ally Cawn professed a regard for Roydullub, and a desire to see him ; but as it was thought such an interview could not be brought about with secrecy ; and if known, would give an alarm to

* First Report, 1772, pp. 229—230.

the Nabab; it was therefore determined to confide in Coja Petrose as the fittest person to make known our whole plan to Cassim Ally Cawn."

Mr. Holwell, who had been directed to intrigue with Rai Durlabh, reported to the meeting that Rai Durlabh

"received the overture with much satisfaction, and approved in general of the plan ; .....He assures the Committee, he highly approves of the intended promotion of *Meer Cassim Ally Cawn* to the Dewanee, and will most readily co-operate with him in all matters, conducive to the completion of our plan, as the only possible means left to recover the peace and flourishing state of the provinces, and revive the Company's trade and influence."*

The English succeeded remarkably in their intrigues against the Nawab, whom they ultimately deposed from the throne of Bengal in the middle of October, 1760.† How they effected this will be

* Ibid, pp. 230—231.

† In the introduction (p. viii) to Vol. III of "Calendar of Persian Correspondence" (Calcutta 1919), Maulvi Badruddin Ahmad writes :—

"The *Nazim* very soon said that he could not satisfy the servants of the Company, unless he yielded to each and every exorbitant demand as it was put forward. His treasury was already drained of its last coin in making good the lavish promises to the Company and its chief servants individually. Bengal was bankrupt, and was fast

evident from the following letter from Mr. Vansittart and Col. Caillaud of 21st October read before the Select Committee held at Fort William on the 24th October, 1760.

"Gentlemen, The Governor wrote you yesterday, of the affairs here being settled to the Company's advantage. We shall now have the honour to acquaint you of the steps by which we advanced to this point of success.

"The Nabob's visit to the Governor at Cossimbazar, the 5th of the month, as well as that we paid him the next day in return, passed only in general conversation. The 18th, he came here to talk upon business. In order to give him a more clear and full view of the bad management of his ministers, by which his own affairs as well as the Company's

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nearing anarchy. The invasion of the *Shahzadah* made matters worse. It exposed the utter helplessness of the *Nazim* and showed the Company how completely he depended on them to defend his territories from outside attacks. They for their part considered that the services which their troops rendered him on this occasion, justified them in seeking yet further privileges, among which was the grant of the *Faujdari* of Sylhet and Islamabad. But the *Nazim* refused to go so far, and the relations between him and the Company were strained to the breaking point. All this while a shrewd and ambitious young man was watching the development of events. Qasim Ali Khan (commonly called Mir Qasim) had been deputed by his father-in-law Nawab Mir Jafar to go to Calcutta as his representative to settle matters with the Council. He

are reduced to so dangerous a state, and the inhabitants in general to want and misery; we had prepared three letters, which after a short and friendly introduction, the Governor delivered to him.....

"The Nabob seemed much affected by the perusal of the letters, but endeavoured more to put an end to the conference than to propose a remedy to the evils. We, however, prevailed on him to send for his dinner to Moraudbag, and in a manner insisted on his coming to some determination for the immediate reform of his government. At length he confessed himself, through age and grief, incapable of struggling against so many difficulties. He desired time to consult with his friends. We told him the men with whom he had lately advised were not his friends but his greatest enemies; that his returning again in the midst of them, would only be the means of augmenting

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asked for a private meeting with Vansittart, who was now the Governor at Fort William, and then and there struck a shameful bargain on his own account. He promised the cession of the three districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the Company, if his father-in-law could be removed from the *masnad* to make room for him. The temptation was too much to be resisted. In October 1760 the old ally of Plassey was deposed by the Council, and the new friend of the Company was installed in his place."

Meer Qasim was married to Fatima Begum, daughter of Nawab Jaffir Khan. He "was highly talented and qualified and was proficient in astrology and mathematics. From the very beginning his career looked promising.

his difficulties : that he had much better take the assistance of one from among his relations, on whose true attachment and fidelity be might more safely rely ; he named five or six, and among them, Kassim Aly Khan. We asked him which of that number was the most proper to assist him in his present exigencies. He replied, without any hesitation, that Kassim Aly Khan was the most proper. Nevertheless it was with the utmost difficulty we could prevail on him to send for him ; and so very late, that before *Kassim Aly Khan* could arrive, the old Nabob was so extremely fatigued and in such a state of anxiety, that we could not refuse his return home to take his rest. We were convinced indeed, that it would be to no purpose to keep him ; for such was the jealousy he discovered with respect to *Kassim Aly Khan* that we saw he never would consent, without some sort of

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"...(He) appropriated a box of valuable jewellery belonging to Lutfunnissa, wife of Siraj-ud-daula, at the time of his going in pursuit of him. By this means his financial position was improved.

"...After the death of Meeran he used to go to his father-in-law very often. So marked and conspicuous were his services that Meer Mohammad Jafar Khan had once to send Meer Mohammad Kasim Khan to the English at Calcutta. As Meer Mohammad Kasim Khan was, comparatively speaking, wiser and more prudent than his relative he fully impressed it on the minds of the English that he too was their friend. The English considered" him "to be possessed of higher administrative powers.....than.....Meer Mohammad Jafar Khan. As there was no other man in the family of Meer Mohammad Jafar Khan better fitted than

force, to give the other the means of restoring order to his affairs. An hour or two after the Nabob's departure *Kassim Ally Khan* arrived, and seemed to be extremely apprehensive, that the Nabob, instead of trusting him with the management of affairs, would endeavour by some means or other to get rid of him. We agreed therefore in opinion with him, that he should not go to the Nabob's house, until measures were taken for his security. We resolved, however, to give the Nabob the next day (the 19th) to reflect upon the letters before-mentioned, in hopes he would propose some means of regulation. We heard nothing from him all day, but found by our intelligence, that he had been in council with his old advisers, *Keneram*, *Moonital* and *Checon*, whose advice, we were sure, would be contrary to the welfare of the country in general, and that of the Company in particular. We determined therefore to act immediately upon the Nabob's fears. There could not be a better opportunity, than the night of the nineteenth afforded, it being the conclusion of the Gentoo feast, when all the principal people of that cast would be pretty well fatigued with their ceremonies. We determined therefore that Colonel Caillaud, with two companies of Military, and

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Meer Mohammad Kasim Khan for responsible work, Meer Kasim was very often entrusted with missions and used to go to the English at Kasimbazar on behalf of his father-in-law. As he discharged the duties entrusted to him with great tact and ability, he was much respected both by the civil and military officers." (Translation of Maharajah Kalyan Singh's Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, by Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Husain Khan, J. Bi & Or. R. S. Sept. 1919, pp. 344—345.

six companies of Sepoys, should cross the river between three and four in the morning, having joined Kassim Ally Khan and his people, march to the Nabob's palace, and surround it just at day-break. Being extremely desirous of preventing any disturbance or bloodshed, the Governor wrote a letter to the Nabob ..... and delivered it to the Colonel, to send it to him at such time as he should think most expedient.....

"The necessary preparations being accordingly made with all care and secrecy possible, the Colonel embarked with the troops, joined Kassim Aly Khan without the least alarm, and marched into the courtyard of the palace, just at the proper instant. The gates of the inner court being shut, the Colonel formed his men without, and then sent the Governor's letter to the Nabob, who was at first in a great rage, and long threatened he would make what resistance he could, and take his fate. The Colonel forbore all hostilities ; and several messages passed by the means of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Lushington,...The affair remained in this doubtful state about two hours ; when the Nabob finding his persisting was to no purpose, sent a message to *Kassim Aly Khan*, informing him, he was ready to send him the seals, and all the ensigns of dignity, and to order the Nobit to be struck up in his name · provided he would agree to take the whole charge of the Government upon him, to discharge all the arrears due to the troops, to pay the usual revenues to the King, to save his life and his honor, and to give him an allowance sufficient for his maintenance. All these conditions being agreed to, *Kassim Ally Khan* was proclaimed.*"

* First Report, 1772, p. 231.

The above is the version of the English as regards the manner in which they effected the second revolution in Bengal. Assuming that every word of what they wrote is true, it shows what treachery they practised in gaining their selfish end.* Perhaps in the arrest of Montezuma and the Inca Athahualpa, Cortez and Pizarro were not guilty of such base treachery as were Vansittart and Caillaud in deposing Meer Jaffer from the musnad of Bengal.

Meer Jaffer repaired to Calcutta, where he was safely lodged.

On December 14th, 1760, in a letter to the Governor, Mir Qasim expressed his opinion that a sum of Rs. 2,000 a month was sufficient for Mir Jafar's expenses.

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* Mr. Lushington, who held the situation of linguist to the army and interpreter to Meer Jaffer in the conversation between him and Colonel Caillaud, wrote in a letter dated 3rd December 1760 to Clive, that

"a meeting was held between the Colonel (Caillaud) and the Nabob, who made the following speech, as well as I can remember :

"The English placed me on the musnad; you may depose me if you please. You have thought proper to break your engagements. I would not mine. Had I such designs I could have raised twenty thousand men, and fought you

It was probably on this being made known to Mir Jafar that he made the Governor write his letter of December 20, 1760, in which it was stated that Mir Jafar

"has relinquished the subadarship. He intends to go to Karbala and hopes for sufficient money for that purpose."

(*Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. I. pp. 43, 44.)

It was necessary to make out something like a case against Meer Jaffer, in order to justify his deposition. So the English authorities of Calcutta met at a consultation on 10th November, 1760, when a memorial setting forth the causes of the late change in the Subahship of Bengal was read. It was stated in the memorial that

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if I pleased. My son, the Chota Nabob (Meeran) forewarned me of all this.'"

(Malcolm's Life of Clive, Vol. II, p. 268.)

Malcolm added to the above,

"That Mr. Lushington did not concur very cordially in the measures described, may be inferred from his concluding observations. 'The Company,' he observes, 'are to receive the countries of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong, for this service. I, therefore, should be glad to know how this Nabob will be any more able to pay his people than the old man after having given away a third part of his revenues.'"

"The Nabob *Jaffier Ally Cawn*, was of a temper extremely tyrannical and avaricious, at the same time very indolent, and the people about him, being either abject slaves and flatterers, or else the base instruments of his vices; ** numberless are the instances of men, of all degrees, whose blood he has spilt without the least assigned reason."

The English tried to paint Meer Jaffer as a monster in human form and guity of all sorts of crimes and enormities. He was described as being the author of several massacres. But that this was not true is evident from what Clive and his colleagues wrote to the Directers of the East India Company in the supplement to their letter dated Fort William, the 30th September, 1765. They wrote:—

"In justice to the memory of the late Nabob Meer Jaffier, we think it incumbent on us to acquaint you, that the horrible massacres wherewith he is charged by Mr. Holwell, in his 'Address to the Proprietors of *East India* Stock' (p. 46), are cruel aspersions on the character of that prince, which have not the least foundation in truth."*

Such was the scrupulous regard for truth which the accusers of Meer Jaffer possessed! The Christian Spaniards under Pizarro brought their victim the Inca before a tribunal and offered him an opportunity to answer the charges they had pre-

* *First Report*, 1772, p. 444.

ferred against him. But the Christian English under Vansittart did not afford any opportunity to Meer Jaffer to answer the charges of which he had been accused. But it was not their object to do justice to Meer Jaffer, or even to treat him fairly. They acted on the proverb, "give a dog a bad name and then hang him." By deposing Meer Jaffer they gained their selfish ends and were richer by twenty lacs of rupees.

Scheming and designing as the natives of England were, their compatriots in Bengal would not have conspired to bring about the second revolution in that province, were it not to benefit them very materially. The advantages which they secured from this revolution were many. Siraj-ud-dowla had at first prohibited the Company from establishing a Mint at Calcutta and coining their own money. But he was, however, afterwards induced to permit them under certain restrictions to establish their own Mint at Calcutta. But this does not seem to have been done in Siraj-ud-dowla's time. It was after the battle of Plassey that Orme writes that

"A mint was established at Calcutta and the first rupees were coined there on the 19th of August 1757."*

* Vol. II, p. 118 (Madras reprint, 1861).

But the mint did not prove such a source of income to them as they had imagined. In their letter of December 29, 1759, the Calcutta authorities complained that the mint was a loss to them owing to the Setts.

"Our Mint is at present of very little use to us, as there has been no bullion sent out of Europe this season or two past, and we are apprehensive that it will never be attended with all the advantages we might have expected from it, as the coining of siccas in Calcutta interferes so much with the interest of the Setts that they will not fail of throwing every obstacle in our way to depreciate the value of our money in the country, notwithstanding its weight and standard is in every respect as good as the siccas of Moorshedabad, so that a loss of batta will always arise on our money, let our influence at the Durbar be ever so great," *

The Setts, who from their enormous wealth, were the bankers, mint-masters and political guides at Murshedabad, understood the interest of their own government, and did not encourage the circulation of the Companys' money in the Nawab's territory. This was considered a grievance by the English which the revolution afforded them an opportunity to remove.

* Long's *Selections from the records of the Government of India, p. 164.*

They stipulated with Meer Cassim that no batta should be charged on the Company's coins. Mr. Vansittart and Colonel Caillaud in their letter of the 21st October, 1760 to the Select Committee at Fort William wrote :—

"A very severe order has already been issued, forbidding all the shrafs and merchants to refuse the *Calcutta* Siccas, or to ask any batta on them." *

Of course, this was a great wrong inflicted on the Nawab and his subjects, for it decreased one of the sources of revenue and so made the economical condition of the Murshedabad Government worse. Politically also it meant to deprive the semblance of independence which the Murshidabad Government possessed in the eyes of the common people.

In the letter from which an extract has already been given above, Mr. Vansittart and Colonel Caillaud wrote :—

"The advantages to the Company are great indeed. The Firmaunds for the countries of *Burdwan* and *Midnapore* and *Chittigan*, we shall receive immediately, as well as that for half of the Chunam already produced at *Silhet*.....A supply of money will be sent with the Colonel for the payment of the troops at *Patna*, and we have even some hopes of obtaining

* *First Report*, 1772, p. 232.

three or four lacks besides to send down to *Calcutta*, to help out the Company in their present occasions there, and at *Madras*.

".....We are the more pleased with this fortunate event at this time, when the approach of peace in *Europe* gives us reason to fear the other *European* nations will find leisure to disturb us here. We shall now have strong resources within ourselves, and an ally whose attachment to the Company my be relied on." *

If the advantages to the Company were great, the advantages to Vansittart, Caillaud and their other colleagues were greater still. For these men extorted from Meer Cassim very large sums of money which were euphemistically described as presents. Regarding these so-called presents, Mr. Amyatt in his minute dated Fort William, the 5th April, 1762 wrote :—

"The Minute given in by the President the 22nd *March*, has not in the least uttered the sentiments of Mr. Amyatt, in regard to the demand proposed by him to be made from *Cossim Ally Cawn*, of the Twenty Laks of Rupees for the use of the Company, as he finds nothing in the minute to invalidate the reason which induced him to propose that the demand should be made ; nor did any minute or expression of Mr. *Vansittart's* ever imply such money was not to be received, but the contrary ; and only rested the payment of it to the Nabob's generosity, after his other expenses were defrayed, which was not risking much ; for

* *Ibid*, p. 232.

whilst we remain so powerful in this country, such a promise the Nabob will look on as binding as a bond; and the taking a bond might bear a bad appearance; for it's acknowledged that a paper was received from him, containing a promise of 20 Lacs of Rupees to Messrs. *Vansittart*, *Caillaud*, *Holwell*, *Sumner*, and *M'Gwire*. Now it's not to be imagined he would have offered so large a sum to these gentlemen, to the exclusion of the other members of the Council and Select Committee (an offer before unprecedented) but, as a consideration to engage them to conclude with him a Treaty, from whence he was to reap so much advantage, without regard to the opinions of the rest of the Board."*

But those Christians' conscience, if they ever possessed any, was so hardened and they were so lost to all sense of honour or shame, that they never paid any heed to what other people said as to their conduct.† Since Mammon was their God,

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* *Ibid*, p. 361.

† When the deposition of Meer Jaffer became known in England, the Court of Directors of the East India Company seemed to appear in their saintly garb by despatching a letter to Calcutta, dated October 7, 1761, in the course of which they wrote:—

"We cannot help observing that it is to the great regard the Company have always had to a faithful observance of their agreements, they have acquired and hitherto preserved a reputation with the Natives of India. We could have wished therefore the situation of affairs would have admitted

they cared for nothing else but the glittering gold. Regarding their bad faith towards Meer Jaffer, Mr. Amyatt, in the course of the minute from which an extract has been given above, wrote that Meer Cossim

"can have no security that we will keep our faith with him, better than we did with his father-in-law, to whom we were bound by engagements more solemn than those since entered into with him : nor can he ever acquit himself of his treachery to *Jaffer Ally Cawn*, who must ever keep alive the suspicions now burning in his breast.—Mr. Amyatt does not allow the smallest degree of merit to Cossim Ally Cawn for having discharged the payments due to the Company and his troops. His being in a condition to do so was entirely owing to the happy change of affairs, by the defeat of the Shahzadah."†

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keeping terms with Jaffer Ally Khan, that even the least handle for a pretence might not have offered to prejudiced people to make use of to throw any reflections upon this transaction."

This was no doubt a counsel of perfection ; but the honourable members of the Court forgot that a scrupulous regard for 'a faithful observance of their agreements,' would not have enabled the Company to establish or extend their power in India. It was by utter disregard and flagrant violation of all tenets of morality and justice and distinct bad faith, that the English succeeded in acquiring political supremacy in India.

† *Ibid*, *Report*, 1772, p. 362.

Several authors have written very strongly regarding the bad faith of the English towards Meer Jaffer. Thus Torrens, in his "Empire in Asia" (pp. 45-46), writes : —

"The iniquity of this transaction finds few apologists even among those who have taken upon themselves to dress and enamel oriental deeds for European view. The treaty with Meer Jaffer still subsisted, and measured by the elastic rules of that convenient code of public morality which conquerors in all ages have striven to pass off under the guise of international law, there was no pretence for such behaviour. He was the sworn and blood-knit ally of the Company and if ever men were bound by decency to maintain at least the forms of good-faith, the Governor and Council of Calcutta was so bound. Yet being so, for the sum of £200000 to them privately paid and for the cession of three rich provinces they sold their too confiding friend and ally."

Regarding the character of Mr. Holwell who conceived the idea of the second revolution in Bengal, one of his compatriots, the author of "Reflections on the present state of our East India affairs," wrote :—

"Being blessed with a genius, uncommonly fertile in expedients for raising money and further unclogged by those silly notions of punctilio which often stand in the way betwix some people and fortune, he had projected and put in practice several inferior manouvres

but this *chef d' oeuvres*, this master-scheme, though formed almost as soon as he came to power, time did not allow him the honour of executing."

Such was the character of the Christian authors of the second revolution in Bengal, which has not found any supporter in any historian of that creed.

CHAPTER III.

Meer Cassim and His Rule.

No sooner was Meer Cassim seated on the *musand* of Bengal than he tried to fulfil all the articles of the treaty he had concluded with the representatives of the East India Company in Bengal. He granted them the permission to establish a Mint in Calcutta and allowed their coins to pass current in Bengal without any one demanding or insisting on a discount upon them.*

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* The following is the *perwannah* for a mint given to the Company by Cossim Ally.

"To the noblest of merchants the English Company be the royal favour. In Calcutta a Mint is established. You shall coin gold and silver of equal weight and fineness with the Ashrefees and Rupees of Moorshidabad in the name of Calcutta. In the Subahs of Bengala, Behar and Orissa, they shall be current and they shall pass in the Royal Treasury and no person shall demand or insist on a discount upon them. Dated the 11th of the moon Zelhada in the 4th year". (Long's Selections, p. 227).

Notwithstanding the above *perwanna* the Nawab's subjects refused to take the Company's Siccas without the batta, so the Company's business was at a standstill. This

The three provinces of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong were also handed over to them. *

But the State Treasury of Murshidabad contained a very insignificant sum of money and

was represented to Meer Cassim, whom they begged to send them a perwannah for the Calcutta Siccas to be stamped as those of Muxadavad. It was however not 'customary that one City Siccas should have the name of those of another city'. But he wrote to the Governor :

"I will tell Roy-royan to threaten the Zemindars and others not to want the batta on the Calcutta Siccas, and those that will not take them without the batta send their name to me and I will severely chastise them, and also the names of those that take the batta send their names to me and I will fine them for it and chastise them properly, then they will not act so again, and the Calcutta Siccas will go the same as those of Muxadabad." Long's Selections, p. 242.

* The following is a translation of the *sunnud* in Burdwan under the seal of the Nawab Meer Cassim :—

"To the Zemindars, Canoongoes, Talookdars, Tenants, Husbandmen, and Chief Villagers of the Pergunnah of Burdwan, &c.—The Zemindaree of the Rajah Tilluck Chand in the districts of the Subah of Bengal, be it known that whereas divers wicked people have traitorously stretched forth their hands to plunder the subjects, and waste the royal dominions, for this reason the said Pergunnah, &c., is granted to the English Company in part disbursement of their expenses, and monthly main-

so Meer Cassim found great difficulty in fulfilling the promise he had made to the Company of paying them in hard cash. However, he never swerved

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tenance of five hundred European horse, two thousand European foot, and eight thousand sepoys, which are to be entertained for the protection of the royal dominions. Let the above officers quietly and contentedly attend and pay to the persons appointed by the English Company the stated revenues, and implicitly submit in all things to their authority, and the office of the Collectors of the English Company is as follows :—

"They shall continue the Zemindars and Tenants in their places, regularly collect the revenues of the lands, and deliver them in monthly for the payment of the expenses of the Company and the pay of the above-mentioned forces, that they may be always ready cheerfully and vigorously to promote the affairs of the King. Let this be punctually observed. Dated the 14th of the month Rubbee-ulawul 1st *Sun* answering to the 1st of the month Cartic 1176, Bengal style.

"*N. B.*—The sunnuds for the Chucla of Midnapore in the districts of the Subah of Orissa, and for the Thannah of Islamabad or Chattgaum appertaining to the Subah of Bengal, are worded as the above."

Long's Selections, pp. 224-225. When the above *purwannah* was forwarded to the Rajah, he wrote a letter to the Governor describing the deplorable state of Burdwan. He also furnished the Company with accounts of the Zemindaree. *Vide* Long's Selections, pp. 226 and 228.

from keeping his word with them and certainly he could not be charged with 'bad faith'. In his letter of December 1760 to the Governor of Bengal, Meer Cassim wrote :—

"I crave from the Almighty that I may always be true to my agreement."*

To be true to his agreement with the English, he did things which were neither just nor proper and which made him very unpopular with his subjects. He extorted money from the landed aristocracy and wealthy people of his dominions by applying every sort of torture to satisfy the greed of his foreign allies. Thus in the letter from which one sentence has been given above, Meer Cassim wrote to the Governor :—

"The removing the Zemindar is a matter of no moment, because the collecting of the King's revenues is of the greatest importance ; for this reason these removals frequently happen. At this time I am in great want of money for the sepoys and other expenses. Rammanund is a wealthy man, and therefore I hope you will give orders to have him sent to me very speedily." †

With the help of the Seths and by converting the jewels and plates of the State into current

* Long's Selections, p. 243.

† *Ibid*, p. 243.

coins of the realm, he succeeded in paying off the English the sums he had promised them. Consequently they were extremely pleased with him.

But the administration of Bengal was not a bed of roses for him—nay, it was full of thorns. He had to repel foreign aggression, and put down internal insurrections. But the worst enemies he had to deal with were the English—whether his declared friends or foes—who made his life extremely miserable.

The foreign aggression was the renewed invasion of Behar by the Emperor of Delhi. As the military operations against that representative of the royal house of Timur and Babar were chiefly conducted by an officer named Major Carnac, it is necessary here to state that he succeeded Colonel Caillaud in the command of the troops in Bengal. In his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1772, Carnac mentioned the circumstances which gave him the command of the troops in Bengal. He said :—

"I left Bengal in *February* 1760, with Lord *Clive*, on my return to *Europe*. At my arrival at *Saint Helena*, I had information that the Court of Directors had appointed me Major of their settlement at Bengal, and Commander of their Forces there.

"In consequence of that information, I availed myself of the opportunity of one of the Company's ships that was at *Saint Helena* and went back to Bengal. I arrived in the Mouth of the River, I think, in the beginning of *October* in that year ; but being detained there five or six days by contrary winds I suppose it was about the 12th or 13th before I arrived at *Calcutta*. I there received a letter from Mr. Vansittart, who had heard of the ship's being in the river, informing me he was gone to *Muxadavad* with Colonel *Caillaud*, and wished me to follow him as soon as possible. I accordingly tarried but a very few days at Calcutta, and proceeded up to Mr. Vansittart. In my way to one of the palaces, called *Moradbog*, where Mr. *Vansittart* was, I of necessity passed by the Nabob's palace, while Colonel Caillaud, with the troops, was there, it being the very day of the revolution, in the act of making the revolution ; and yet everything was so quiet, that I passed the place without having any idea of the matter. Mr. Vansittart, upon our meeting, informed me of what had been transacted." *

The officer whom Carnac succeeded, had very largely benefited by the revolution. But not so Carnac. It was perhaps this reason which made him an enemy of Cossim Ally and join the party of the English in Bengal who were opposed to the dethronement of Meer Jaffer and the elevation in his stead of Cossim to the musnad of Bengal.

Carnac was ordered to proceed to Patna, which

* First Report, 1772, p. 164.

he reached in January 1761 and took command of the troops. The Mogul Emperor had been still in Behar and exerted his influence to collect men with the aim of recovering that part of the country for the Crown of Delhi. Ever since the assassination of Siraj-ud-dowla the English had to fight almost every year the Great Moghul—at first as Crown Prince, but afterwards the real monarch of Delhi. The revolution, which was very unpopular with almost every class in Bengal, was driving zemindars and peasants to rally round the standard of the Mogul Emperor. So it was considered necessary by the English to attack him without delay. In the words of Mr. Mill :—

"The province of Bahar had suffered so much from the repeated incursions of the Emperor ; and the finances both of the Nabob and of the Company were so much exhausted by the expense of the army required to oppose him, that the importance was strongly felt of driving him finally from that part of the country. The rains were no sooner at an end than the English Commander, accompanied by the troops of Ramnarain, and those which had belonged to Meeran, advanced towards the Emperor, who was stationed at Gyah Maunpore. The unhappy monarch made what exertions he could to increase his feeble army ; but Carnac reached his camp by three days' march ; forced him to an engagement, and gained a victory."*

* Vol. III, p. 218.

The terms upon which peace was concluded with the Emperor will be presently narrated. But it is necessary to mention the internal disturbances which had to be quelled almost at the same time when they had to fight the Mogul monarch. The Rajas of Burdwan and Beerbhoom rose up in arms against the new Nawab. It is alleged that they did so in concert with the Mogul Emperor, because they were averse to the recent revolution in Bengal—and one of them, at least, the Raja of Burdwan, being bound hand and foot together and delivered to the tender mercies of the English. That chief and his tenants had been plundered and ill-treated by the Mahrattas as well as the Sepoys serving under the English. Raja Tilak Chand of Burdwan in his letter of August 1760 to the authorities of Calcutta wrote :—

"How can I relate to you the present deplorable situation of this place ? Three months the Mahrattas remained here, burning, plundering and laying waste the whole country, but now, thank God, they are all gone, but the inhabitants are not yet returned. The inhabitants have lost almost all they were worth.

* * * * *

"It has been my bad fortune to have my country burned, plundered and destroyed by the Mahrattas, which is the reason that there is now a balance due to the Company ;

and to reinstate my country again must be attended with great difficulties, which gives me much uneasiness."*

Regarding the Telinga Sipahis plundering Burdwan ryots, Raja Tilak Chand wrote to Calcutta, presumably in September 1760 :—

"A number of Telingees are gone into the pergannahs of Mundulghaut, Monkore, Juhanabaud, Chitwar, Bursat, Balgurry, Chomahan and other places and have plundered the inhabitants and otherwise ill-treated them to the danger of their lives, and which has obliged them to run away, and detrimented the places to the amount of 2 or 3 lacs of rupees. I am sensible this is not your intention, but where the Telingees went they have beat the inhabitants, your placing a camp in the roads was necessary, and they had no occasion to go to the villages and therefore I desire you will write to the officer there to recall the Telingees from the villages, that the inhabitants may be free from their ill-treatment." †

But the Telingas continued plundering. So Raja Tilak Chand wrote again that

"the ryots, from the behaviour of the Telingees, suffer greatly and are obliged to leave their habitations. From this a considerable loss will accrue." ‡

Raja Tilak Chand seemed to have spoken to

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* Long's Records, p. 233.

† Ibid. p. 236.

‡ Ibid, ditto.

deaf ears. There is nothing to show that the Telinga Sepoys were adequately punished for their transgressions.

The Beerbhoom Raja was also giving trouble to the Zemindar and ryots of Burdwan. Raja Tilak Chand wrote to Calcutta in September 1760 :—

"How can I describe the ill-treatment of the Beerbhoom Rajah, the pergunnahs of Sherugur, Sunpany, Gualler, Boon,.....are ruined, and it is at your pleasure to get me redress. What more can I write." *

But the Burdwan Raja did not get any redress from the Calcutta authorities. So when on the elevation of Cossim to the musnad of Bengal, his territory was handed over to the Company, he did not certainly hail it with delight. It must have appeared to him that he was going to be placed under King Stork. So he was driven to revolt. He commenced raising troops,† entered into a league even with his enemy, the Raja of Beerbhoom‡, and was declared by Cossim in November 1760 to be in revolt, § who wrote to Calcutta :—

"I hear from Burdwan that the Zamindar intends to

* Ibid, p. 238.

† *Ibid*, p. 238, No. 504.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 238, No. 506.

§ *Ibid*, p. 238, No. 507.

fight, and that he has collected together 10 or 15 thousand peons and robbers and taken them into pay and joined the Beerbhoom Rajah. Since this I am preparing speedily to send 2 or 3 thousand horsemen, and 5 or 6 thousand peons to chastise the Beerbhoom Rajah."

The Calcutta authorities asked the Rajah of Burdwan to come to Calcutta to settle the concerns of his district. But he

"absconded with his family through fear of being compelled to give up his country." *

Proper persons were sent to endeavour to convince him of the good intentions of the English towards him, esteeming lenient methods the properest on their first entering upon those lands.

However, the Calcutta authorities sent troops under the command of Captain White to take

"possession for the Company of the countries of Burdwan and Midnapore and this is to be done without hostilities."

He was instructed to

"wait at Hooghly.....if the Rajah does not submit," he "will proceed to Amboa in order to march from thence to Burdwan, but if he should come to terms,....." he "will then march directly from thence to Midnapoor."†

Captain White's march on Burdwan was accompanied with much bloodshed of and oppres-

* *Ibid*, p. 248, No. 533.

† *Ibid*, p. 249, No. 534.

sion on the poor inhabitants of the country. This is evident from the letter of Raja Tilak Chand written to Calcutta in January 1761.*

The Raja of Burdwan, that of Birbhum and the Mahrattas united to oppose the Nawab and the English.† In fact they made a common cause, for there was an identity of interests.

Captain White fought a battle with the Burdwan Raja on the 28th December 1760.‡ A detachment of troops under Major Yorke took possession of Nagore, the capital of Beerbhum, the Raja having abandoned it, and gone with the utmost expedition to the hills.

There is strong ground to believe that the union of the Rajas of Burdwan and Beerbhum and the Mahrattas to oppose the Nawab and the English was brought about by Nund Kumar Roy. He was a real patriot and a far-seeing statesman. His private life was above reproach and the only blot that ever tarnished the reputation of his public career was when as Foujdar of Hugli under Siraj-ud-dowla he gave passage to the British in

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* *Ibid*, p. 250, No. 539.

† *Ibid*, p. 250, No. 537.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 260-262.

1757 to attack Chandernagore without fighting them. Of course it was a fatal error. But he did not know the English then so well as he came to know them afterwards and it was Amin Chand by whose persuasion he was made to betray the interests of his master Siraj-ud-dowla.

Nund Kumar saw his country sold to the English and the Nawab made a mere puppet in their hands. It was high time to check their progress, and so he strained every nerve to coalesce the native powers that then existed under the standard of the Mogul Emperor of Delhi and oppose the further extension of the British power. Everything being considered fair in love and war, the means which he used to bring about his desired result, although not commendable, should not be condemned. The Nawab wrote to Calcutta, on 24th February 1761 :—

"I have before wrote your Excellency concerning the contents of the letter I had intercepted of Nuncoomar's, that he had carried on a correspondence with our enemies ; that I had made him a prisoner and was examining his papers. On an examination thereof I find that he corresponded with the ShahZadah's people, Coingar Khan and Sree Bhut ; Nuncoomar has also endeavoured to detriment the affairs of your Sirkar and the Company's. He is therefore undoubtedly culpable, and had it been of

such a nature as to come under the tenor of our laws, he would not have escaped unpunished."*

History does not brand the name of Nund Kumar as a traitor, but regards him as a patriot and a real statesman.

As said before, the Emperor of Dehli was defeated in the battle fought by Carnac. Shuja-ud-dowla, the Nawab of Oude, who was with him, left him immediately after the defeat. Carnac sent Rajah Shitab Roy as his envoy to the Emperor to make an overture of peace on favorable terms. But the Rajah came back disappointed, for the Emperor did not desire to make peace with the English on the terms proposed. However, when he was deserted by the Nawab of Oude and other noted chiefs, he found himself in a fix and to extricate himself from this position there was no other alternative left to him than to accept the terms offered to him by the English. He did this and came to the camp of Carnac, by whom he was conducted to Patna, where Meer Cassim had also arrived.

The year 1761 was not yet a week old when occurred an event the importance of which in greatly contributing to establish the British supremacy

* Ibid, p. 247, No. 553.

in this country has not been sufficiently laid stress upon by writers of Indian History. That event was the battle fought at Panipat on the 3rd January 1761. It is not necessary to mention in detail all the circumstances and causes which brought about the battle. It is sufficient for our purpose to state here that both the parties to this battle were highlanders—one of the North beyond the Indus, which used to be considered the geographical boundary of India proper and the other of the South belonging to that race which came into prominence owing principally to the military genius of him whom Aurangzebe contemptuously nicknamed "the mountain rat." The Afghans and the Marathas were both highlanders and the guerilla mode of warfare was natural to both. A pitched battle on the plains of India was quite foreign to the native genius of both the parties. However, it was fought with tremendous losses to both.

The Afghans were brought to the battle under the leadership of their monarch Ahmed Shah Abdalli. He was a remarkable man—the first of his race to unite the different clans of the Afghans, given to cutting each other's throat, and to try to form them into a nation. He had learnt the military art and system of administration at the feet of his master Nadir Shah, whom he succeeded as ruler

of Afghanistan in 1747. When he became the King of the Afghans, the condition of India was such that it tempted every adventurer, whether foreign or indigenous, to try his fortune there.

"In India the Moguls, who had never been the undisputed masters of the peninsula, never recovered from the sack of Delhi. The news of that great calamity went sounding the tale of their weakness through the land, confirming chiefs, like the Wazir of Oudh and Nizam-ul-Mulk, in their usurpations, encouraging a multitude of petty commanders to assume independence, and converting the growth of the Mahratta power, for a time, into the national cause of the Hindus against their Muhammadan oppressors. Nadir's retreat left the Mahrattas battling for dominion in the Deccan with the Nizam, while farther to the south the Viceroy of the Carnatic was independent; and there was a grand medley of war, in which French, English, Mahrattas, and Deccanese, fought and intrigued with unflagging energy, prompted by the most jealous ambition. In Bengal the Viceroy Allahvardi Khan was fast rising into a power. Nearer Delhi the Jats were waiting for an opportunity to extend their infant state of Bhurtpore on the one side, whilst on the other the Rohillas were laying the foundations of the principality of Rampore."*

Ahmed Shah saw his opportunity and meditated invasion of India. This he did, for,

"The Government which insisted on all swords being

* Calcutta Review, Vol. LI, pp. 6-7.

sheathed at home, was bound to find employment abroad, and this necessity was recognized by the tribes as a chief part of the national policy."*

In India the Mahrattas were daily growing into power and they had extended their influence into the very heart of the Empire. Ahmed Shah, with the eyes of a political seer, saw that if the Mahrattas were not checked in their course of military conquests, India would no longer remain a Muhammadan State but would be reconverted into a Hindu Kingdom. Before the fighting of the famous battle of Paniput,

"He sent messengers to the Rohilla chiefs and to the Nawab of Oudh, and laboured to make them realise the conviction forced upon his own mind, that the great fight before them would be a battle of the Muslim against the Hindu, a fight of races and of religions, such as had not been known since the days when Mahmud of Ghazni laid the foundations of the Muhammadan power by the annexation of the Punjab."†

It was then with the avowed object of curbing the growing power of the Mahrattas and recognizing the Moghal Emperor of Delhi as the real sovereign of all India that Ahmed Shah undertook his expedition to India which culminated in the memorable battle at Panipat.

* *Ibid*, p. 13.

† *Ibid*, p. 22.

At Dehli, Ghaziuddin, who on the death of Safdar Jung, the Nawab of Oude, assumed the title of Wazir, had blinded the Emperor and raised a child to the throne by the title of Alamgir II, passing over the true heir of the Empire, Prince Ali Gauhar, afterwards known as Shah Alam. This prince was fighting the English in Behar.

Ghaziuddin was not strong enough to maintain his position and influence at Dehli without the Mahrattas whose aid he called in. The Mahrattas very cheerfully responded to his call and Raghunath Rao, the brother of the Peishwa, came to his aid, bringing with him a large contingent of his fellow-countrymen from the South. At the request of Adina Beg, who was Ahmed Shah's Governor of Lahore, Raghunath Rao undertook the conquest of the Panjab, which he effected very easily. But it was this very conquest which was fatal to the Mahrattas. It did not bring in to them any gain in money or plunder but made them losers to the extent of 80 lakhs of rupees and excited the wrath of Ahmed Shah, who, to recover his province and chastise the Mahrattas, set out on his expedition to India in 1759.

When Raghoonath Rao returned to the Deccan, he was not hailed as a conquering hero, but reprimanded for causing a loss to the Peishwa's

treasury to the tune of 80 lakhs. Raghoonath or Raghoba, as he was familiarly called, was always an unfortunate and short-sighted man. He took umbrage at the treatment he received on his return from the North. So when Ahmed Shah invaded Hindustan, he refused to take command of the Mahratta troops and proceed to Hindustan to oppose him. This duty had therefore to be performed by some one else. The person selected for this task was a cousin of the reigning Peishwa, by name Sadasheo Bhow, to whose care was confided the Peishwa's son Wiswas Rao.

The Bhow marched out of the Deccan at the head of thirty thousand men in the finest condition and splendidly equipped. Of this twenty thousand were cavalry and ten thousand artillery and infantry. The latter two arms of the service were trained upon European pattern and commanded by Ibrahim Khan Gardee (? Gadre), an old follower of M. Bussy.

The number of this Maratha force went on increasing as it proceeded to the north. Not only Holkar and Sindhia, the two most prominent members of the Mahratta confederacy, joined it with their very respectable armies, but Rajput princes also sent bodies of cavalry and the Jat ruler of Bhurtpore appeared in person with 30,000

men. According to the author of the History of the Marathas,

"It seemed the national cause with all Hindoos."

But to the incapacity of the Commandant Bhow should be attributed the failure of this expedition. According to one Casi Raja Pundit, who was present at the battle of Paniput and an account of which he wrote in Persian ;—

"The army under his command was very numerous, and they set out on their expedition without delay ; but, as soon as they had passed the Nerbudda, the Bhow began to exercise his authority in a new and offensive manner, and both in settling the accounts of the army and revenue, and in all public business he showed a capricious and self-conceited conduct. He totally excluded from his council Mulhar Row, and all the other chiefs who were experienced in the affairs of Hindostan, and who had credit and influence with the principal people in that country, and carried on everything by his own opinion alone."

The Maratha army was encumbered with heavy and useless baggages, women, children and followers. This was a great mistake.

The Bhow alienated the feelings of his Muhammadan allies by his conduct at Delhi. When entering the castle there with Viswas Row, he

"seized upon a great part of the royal effects that he found there; especially the ceiling of the great hall of audience, which was of silver, and made at an immense

expense, 'was pulled down, and coined into seventeen lacks of rupees. Many other actions of the same kind were done."

It is mentioned by the same author from whose writings the above extracts are given, that it was the intention of the Bhow to place Wiswas Row upon the throne of Delhi.

All these indiscreet acts of the Bhow offended the susceptibilities of the Muhammadans. The Nawab, who had relied on the Mahratta support for the maintenance of his position, did not and could not join the cause of the Bhow with that enthusiasm which, under other circumstances, he would have most readily done.

The position of the Bhow then was by no means an enviable one—he had offended the principal members of the Mahratta Confederacy, also the Jat Prince and the Muhammadan allies. He was encumbered with heavy baggages, women and children and useless camp followers. The men who composed his army were of the south and not insured to the climate of the north of India. So any one could easily foresee the result of the battle which he was to fight with the Afghan monarch.

The battle was fought on the 6th of January 1761. The Jat Prince with his army had given the slip to the Marathas. Holkar remained inac-

tive and the Nawab of Oude played the part of a traitor to the Bhow. Consequently, the fate of the Mahrattas was doomed. They were defeated with great slaughter. Their leader and the heir-apparent to the Peishwaship were among the slain.

But Ahmed Shah also purchased the victory very dearly. His casualties were also so heavy, that he could not take full advantage of the victory by pursuing the vanquished, and extending his influence to other provinces beyond Delhi. He had soon after to return to his native country. He was the last of the Muhammadan invaders of India, and the battle of Panipat was the last victory gained by the followers of the Crescent on the Indian soil.

Professor Sydney Owen in concluding his interesting work on "India on the eve of the British Conquest" truly observed:

"With the battle of Paniput, the native period of Indian History may be said to end. Henceforth the interest gathers round the progress of the Merchant Princes from the far West."

This battle contributed more largely and effectively to the rise of the political supremacy of the English in India than anything else. It broke the back of the Mahrattas, who became henceforth unable to extend their influence to

Bengal, where the British were slowly gathering their strength. It also prevented the Afghans from again invading India. Thus two of the nations who were in the field for wresting the sceptre of India from the feeble grasp of the Mogul Emperors of India were, as it were, driven out of it, of which the British began gradually to assert themselves as the undisputed masters.

After this little digression we must go back and take up the thread of the narrative we have dropped. The Mogul Emperor was a fugitive in Behar. In his own capital, Ghaziuddin had passed him over and seated on the throne an infant. But Ahmed Shah recognized him as the legitimate Musalman sovereign of India, and dismissing Ghaziuddin, appointed Shuja-ud-dowla the Nawab of Oude as the Vazir of the Empire. So the Emperor was anxious to return to Dehli. In recognition of the hospitality and good treatment he had received at the hands of the English, he offered the Dewany of Bengal, Behar and Orissa to the Company, but at this time it was not convenient for the Company to accept such a responsibility. So Major Carnac was instructed to decline the offer.

The Emperor was anxious for the English to conduct him to Dehli, but this the calculating Christian merchants declined to do. Mr. Vansit-

tart and other members of the Board at Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors in London :—

"The first thing that occurs under the head of Country Powers is the Proclamation of Shah Alam (formerly known by the name of the Shahzada) as King of Delhi. He remained at Patna till the beginning of June [1761], and was extremely desirous of having a body of English forces accompanying him to his capital ; but as we were uncertain of Colonel Coote's regiment coming down from the coast and the security of your possessions in Bengal was first to be regarded, we found it impossible to spare a sufficient detachment for undertaking so distant and so important a service. The king, therefore, being pressed by his relations at Delhi to proceed thither with all expedition, and Shuja-ud-daula, the Nawab of Oude, whom he has appointed his Vizier, having advanced to the borders of his province to meet him, he determined not to wait longer for our assistance. The Nawab Meer Cossim supplied him with considerable sums of money during his residence at Patna, and at the time of his departure caused Sicca Rupees to be struck in his name throughout these provinces ; of which having advised the President, it was agreed that the Siccas in the name of Shah Alam should also be struck in our Mint on the 15th of July, which was accordingly done, the usual notice being first given. Shah Alam is not, however, as yet generally acknowledged. The late Vizier [at Delhi] has engaged some of the Chiefs of the Empire in his party, and has formed a considerable army to oppose the King and Shuja-ud-daula on their way to Delhi.....

"We hope, however, that none of the contending

parties will return this way, and that Bengal will continue to enjoy a state of tranquility.*

Meer Cossim agreed to pay the King an annual tribute of twenty-four lakhs as the imperial share of the revenue of the three provinces, and so he secured the letters of investitute from the King, whose name was still held in profound respect throughout Hindustan and whose sign manual sufficed for the grant of the provinces.

The Calcutta authorities hearing of the Nawab getting letters of investiture for the three provinces from the King, followed his example. They expected to secure the letters of investiture from the King without paying anything for the same. But the King refused to grant the letters unless a proper tribute was remitted to the Imperial Treasury.

The foreign aggression being repelled and internal insurrections crushed, the Nawab had to deal with the English, whether his professed friends or declared enemies. He had been placed on the musnad of Bengal not by the unanimous voice of all the members of the Select Committee but by the conspiracy of the majority of its members, the remaining not

* Wheeter's Early Records of British India, pp. 275—276.

having been even consulted as to the measure. The money that had been extorted from him was not distributed among all the members but only among five. So those members who had not been pecuniarily benefited by the Revolution, did not naturally look upon it with favour. They, therefore, found nothing good in the administration of Meer Cossim. They addressed a letter, dated Fort William, 11 th March 1762, to the Court of Directors, in which they violently attacked Meer Cossim's administration and also those who had conspired to place him on the throne of Bengal. The letter is a very long one and a few extracts only can be reproduced from it here. They wrote :—

"Since his accession to the subadaree, we could produce to you numberless instances of his extortions and cruelties, but that it would run us into an exorbitant length ; and he seems to have made the more immediate objects of his ill-usage, those who had been the most avowed friends of the English. We shall only particularize *Ramnarain*, whom he dispossessed of the Naibship of *Patna;* in which it was always thought sound policy in us to support him, on account of his approved faith ; and he now keeps him in irons till he has been fleeced to the utmost, when there is no doubt he will be dispatched ; most, if not all those who espoused the English interest, have been laid under the heaviest contributions, and many have died under the force of the torture to exact money from them ; others have

been either basely murdered, or, (which is a common practice amongst Gentoos) unable to survive the loss of honour, have made away with themselves."

The manner in which Ram Narain was handed over to the tender mercies of Meer Cossim is a great blot on the character of the English who managed the affairs of the Company at Calcutta. Major Carnac refused to obey the orders of the Calcutta anthorities and deliver Ram Narain to the Nabob. It was said that Ram Narain was in arrear to the Nawab. Carnac in his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1772 said :—

"Ram Narain was a very able man, but very avaricious, and he had the credit of being very wealthy, which was motive sufficient for Cossim Ally Khan to wish to have him in his power. He was always an object of jealousy of the Nabob's, and even Meer Jaffer wished to have had hold of his treasures; however, my Lord Clive had secured him from any injustice of that nature, and it was deemed a proper point of policy to support Ram Narain, and the first orders I received after the victory over the Shawzadda were to maintain the engagements which had been observed in Lord Clive's time, with respect to protecting Ram Narain from any violence or injustice on the part of the Nabob. The plea of his being in arrear was the pretext always made use of for oppressing him but without foundation; for in the frequent conversations I had with Ram Narain on the subject, he always seemed ready to come to a fair and equi-

table account. The Governor and Council thought proper afterwards to give me contrary directions respecting that unfortunate man. There stands upon the Company's records a letter from me to the Board, showing the contrariety of their orders, and an absolute refusal, while I was at the head of their forces, of doing so dishonorable an act, as delivering up this man to his enemy."

For disobeying the orders of the Calcutta authorities, Carnac was superseded by Colonel Coote, who had returned from the Coromandel Coast. But Coote also refused to deliver Ram Narain to the Nawab. In his evidence before the above-mentioned Committee, Coote said that

"The Nabob.....turned his thoughts entirely towards the seizing of Ram Narain, for which, if I would give him up, he offered me seven lack and a half of rupees, and whatever I pleased to the gentlemen of my family ; this I communicated, by letter, to the Governor and Council of 17th July 1761. The Nabob finding he could not gain his point, with regard to Ram Narain, then thought it necessary to write the Governor, Mr. Vansittart, the most scandalous invectives, and false accusations against me....."

The Governor, Mr. Vansittart, removed both Carnac and Coote from Patna, and so Ram Narain fell into the hands of the Nawab. It is not improbable that Mr. Vansittart and those who sided with him consented to deliver Ram Narain to the Nawab owing to the latter offering them a very heavy bribe. Mr. Mill writes :—

"This was the fatal error of Mr. Vansittart's administration : because it extinguished among the natives of rank all confidence in the English protection ; and because the enormity to which, in this instance, he had lent his support, created an opinion of a weak or a corrupt partiality, and diminished the weight of his interference when the Nawab was really the party aggrieved."*

Regarding Mr. Vansittart, Mr. Amyatt and others wrote in the letter to the Court of Directors dated 11th March 1762, a letter which has already been referred to above :—

"It is very natural for any person who takes an uncommon step, to endeavour to vindicate himself by the most specious arguments, and the most plausible reasoning he can devise, and nothing less could be expected from Mr. Vansittart after having brought about so unprecedented a revolution. He has told his story with all the aggravations the nature of it would admit ; norwithstanding which, we do not imagine the reasons he has given in support of so violent a measure, will prove satisfactory to the world. He takes great pains to blacken Meer Jaffer's character, in order to prejudice men's minds against him, and lays great stress upon the scarcity of grain in the City ; but we apprehend Mr. Vansittart does not judge so harshly from that circumstance, after what he has himself experienced last year : for, notwithstanding all the care we are not to doubt he has taken, grain was never so scarce in Calcutta before, in so much that numbers daily perished."

The signatories to the above letter then

* Vol. III, p. 224.

proceeded to describe the unpopularity of the Revolution. They wrote :—

"So bad an impression of us did the Revolution create in the minds of the country people, that the Burdwan Rajah, who, in Jaffier Ally Cawn's time, had often expressed his earnest desire that the Company might continue to collect the revenues of his district, as they had all along done on account of the Tunckaws, and that they would procure the Zemindary for themselves from the Nabob ; yet after the breach of our faith to the old Nabob, concluding no reliance was to be placed on our engagements, he immediately flew off from his former declarations, and instead of acquiescing under our government, he began to act in open rebellion, he stopped our trade, raised a large force, invited the *Morattas* into his country, withheld the payment of his revenues, and acting in conjunction with the Beerbhoom Rajah, he espoused the cause of the Shah Zadah, with whom he entered into correspondence.....

"The Nabob's troops were rendered quite mutinous by the news of the Revolution ;....."

They very truly observed :

"If the Nabob had purchased the power he is invested with, it is to be expected he will of course make the most of it, by extorting money from his subjects, and oppressing every province as much as he can ; and as the fate of *Jaffer Ally Chan* must have convinced him how little we regard the most sacred engagements, he will of necessity endeavour to establish himself on a foundation less precarious than the friendship of the English. That he already begins to do so is evident from his still increasing the number of his troops (notwithstanding the present tranquility) and

to render them the more formidable, he is arming and disciplining as many sepoys as he can procure in the European manner; and to secure himself as much as possible from us, esteeming his Capital, Morshedabad (the scene of his predecessor's fall) too near our Settlements, he is about erecting a large fort at Rajamaul, which he proposes to make his place of residence, where he hopes to be out of our reach.

"When any member of the Board suggests that the Nabob's behaviour argues a suspicion of us,.....it is replied 'The Nabob is master of his country, and being independent of us, is at liberty to rule and act as he pleases'. But surely *Cassim Ally Chan* cannot be more so than his predecessor was; and if it be true that the Nabob of Bengal is independent of the English, and master of his own actions, how can the gentlemen justify their proceedings against *Mir Jaffer*, whom they called to so severe an account, for the administration of his own government, as to depose him, though he had not been guilty of any offence to our nation, nor ever deviated from his treaty?"

Then they referred to the want of confidence of the Mogul Emperor in Cossim Ally.

"His Majesty, before his departure, gave the most unquestionable proof of his hatred to *Cassim Ally Khan*, of his esteem for the *English*, by the voluntary offer he made them of the Dewany of Bengal. This post is the collection of the revenues of all the provinces subject to the Nabob, which are to be accounted for with the Court of Delhi. It differs from the Subadaree; the latter being the command of the troops, and the charge of the jurisdic-

tion in the provinces; the expenses whereof are paid out of the revenues by the Dewan.....From the nature of the office it is evident that the King, distrusting the Nabob, intended that we should be a check upon him, and be answerable for the revenue,....."

Such was the tenor of the letter signed by Eyre Coote, P. Amyatt, John Carnac, W. Ellis, S. Batson and H. Verelst. They were, of course, all declared enemies of Meer Cassim and so never left a stone unturned to blacken his character.

But those Englishmen who professed themselves to be his friends were so from no other motive than that of fleecing him. They tried to take undue advantages of him, for, being primarily a nation of shopkeepers and as worshippers of Mammon; they were attracted to India by the saint-seducing gold. By means of trade they meant to enrich themselves. In this country, under its native rulers, the transit of goods was subject to duties. The English Company had secured by phirman the exemption from these duties. But this did not extend to the private trade of the servants of the Company, who, it should be remembered, were allowed to indulge in trade and speculations in those days. The servants of the Company had to pay the same duties as the subjects of the Nawab. But on the eleva-

tion of Meer Cossim to the throne of Bengal, the servants of the Company tried to evade the payment of the duties on the private trade which they carried on, and apply the Company's passport to protect their private trade in every part of the country. In the words of Mill :—

"The Company's servants, whose goods were thus conveyed entirely free from duty, while those of all other merchants were heavily burdened, were rapidly getting into their own hands the whole trade of the country, and thus drying up one of the sources of the public revenue. When the collectors of these tolls, or transit duties, questioned the power of the dustuck, and stopped the goods, it was customary to send a party of sepoys to seize the offender and carry him prisoner to the nearest factory."*

The enormities arising from the private trade were borne testimony to by many contemporary Englishmen. The opinions of some of them are reproduced below.

Thus Mr. Warren Hastings in a letter to the President, dated Bhagalpur, 25th April, 1762, wrote :—

"I have been surprised to meet with several English flags flying in places which I have passed;.....By whatever title they have been assumed, I am sure their frequency can bode no good to the Nabob's revenues, the quiet of the country, or the honor of our nation.....Many complaints

* Vol. III, pp. 229-230.

against them (Sepoys) were made me on the road; and most of the petty towns and serais were deserted at our approach and the shops shut up from the apprehensions of the same treatment from us."

Mr. Verelst says :

"that a trade free from duties had been claimed by the Company's servants, supported by their forces, and established by the last treaty with Meer Jaffer;.....At this time many black merchants found it expedient to purchase the name of any young writer, in the Company's Service, by loans of money, and under this sanction harassed and oppressed the natives. So plentiful a supply was derived from this source that many young writers were enabled to spend 1500 £., and £2000 per annum, were clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

Again, he says :—

"A trade was carried on without payment of duties, in the prosecution of which infinite oppressions were committed. .....This was the immediate cause of the war with Meer Cossim." View of Bengal, pp. 8 and 46).

The Court of Directors also condemned the inland trade as it was then carried on by their servants in Bengal. In their letter dated the 8th February 1764 to the President and Council of Bengal, they wrote :—

"One grand source of the disputes, misunderstandings, and difficulties, which have occurred with the country government, appears evidently to have taken its rise from the unwarrantable and licentious manner of carrying on the

private trade by the Company's servants, their gomastahs, agents, and others, to the prejudice of the Soubah, both with respect to his authority and the revenues justly due to him; their diverting and taking from his natural subjects the trade in the inland parts of the country, to which neither we or any persons whatsoever dependent upon us, or under our protection, have any manner of right, and consequently endangering the Company's very valuable privileges. In order therefore to remedy all these disorders, we do hereby positively order and direct,

"That from the receipt of this letter, a final and effectual end be forthwith put to the inland trade in salt, betel-nut, tobacco, and in all other articles whatsoever produced and consumed in the country; and that all European and other agents or gomastahs, who have been concerned in such trade be immediately ordered down to Calcutta, and not suffered to return or be replaced as such by any other persons."

Of course, the Court of Directors took a very just and sensible view of the case, but their orders were not obeyed by the Calcutta British authorities.

Mr. William Ellis was appointed the Provincial Chief of the Company's factory at Patna. He was a man of very violent temper and a declared enemy of the Nawab as well as of the Governor Vansittart. He never let an opportunity pass without insulting the Nawab or trying to set his authority at naught. He was the direct cause of

most of the troubles, ill feelings, and misunderstandings between the Nawab and the Company. Mr. Vansittart * has described some of the instances of the ill treatment which the Nawab received at the hands of Mr. Ellis.

It is not necessary to refer to the other disputes of Mr. Ellis with the Nabob except those relating to the Inland Trade. In a letter dated Patna the 7th October 1762, Mr. Ellis wrote to Mr. Vansittart and Council of Calcutta that

"To prevent any blame being thereafter thrown on us, for the deficiency of our investment, we are now to inform you, that at *Johannabad*, the principal cloth Aurung, our Gomasthas, Dellols, &c., have been peremptorily ordered to desist from purchasing, and to quit the place. Upon their noncompliance, they have been threatened and abused in the most vile and gross terms, and the washermen employed in whitening our cloths have been actually beat, and peons put on them to prevent their going on in their business.

"*Rajah Nobut Roy* (to whom the Chief has twice complained of these proceedings) declares, that the person (Peru Roy) who thus insults us, and impedes the Company's business, is independent of him, so that it would seem he is sent by the Nabob merely for this purpose.

"If such insolence is suffered to pass unnoticed, we can have no hopes of completing our investment; for who will serve us, whilst they thereby subject themselves to such

* Narrative, Vol. I, pp. 300-314 and 323; also 326 to the end, and Vol. II, 1-11.

severe and ignominious treatment from the country government ?

"For the carrying on the Company's business, 'tis evident, we must be obliged to repel force by force, and shall do so, unless we receive your honour &c. orders to the contrary."

Mr. Ellis was an unscrupulous man and possessed a very violent temper. No sooner was his letter received than the Calcutta authorities in a letter, dated Fort William, 16th October, 1762, wrote to him :

"This instant we have received your letter of the 7th ; and inclose a letter from the President to the Nabob, on the subject of your complaint, and hope it will be effectual in removing all interruption in the Company's business.— But, at all events, as we have it sufficiently in our power to procure satisfaction for any injury that may be done to the interests of our employers, you are on no account to make use of force, without our express directions. You do not mention, in your letter, that you made any application to the Nabob to put a stop to the difficulties you represent, and which certainly you ought to have done, when you was informed, that the person you complain of was independent of the Naib of Patna ; at least, it should have occurred to you, that such application was necessary, before you should propose to make use of force."

Complaints were also received at Calcutta from the chiefs of the Company's factories at Luckypore and Dacca of the English boats being

stopped and duties levied on them, which threatened to occasion an entire stoppage of their trade. *

The Nawab's officers, servants and subjects had been ill treated by the orders of the English traders. Mr. Vansittart, in his Narrative, Vol. II, p. 112, publishes the following letter to the Nabob from one of his officers, dated Backergunj, May 25, 1762 :—

"My instructions which I brought here were, that in case any Europeans or their servants committed any disorders, they were to be sent to Calcutta,.....Notwithstanding the rigour of these orders, I have ever made it my business to endeavour, by gentle means, to persuade the gentlemen's gomasthas here to act in a peaceable manner; which, although repeated several times, has had no effect;.....This place was of great trade formerly, but is now brought to nothing by the following practices. A gentleman sends a gomastah here to buy or sell. He immediately looks upon himself as sufficient to force every inhabitant, either to buy his goods or sell him theirs, and on refusal, (in case of non-capacity) a flogging or confinement immediately ensues. This is not sufficient even when willing, but a second force is made use of, which is to engross the different branches of trade to themselves, and not to suffer any persons to buy or sell the articles they trade in; .....and again, what things they purchase, they think the least they can do is, to take them for a considerable deal

* Third Report, 1773, pp. 335-336.

less than another merchant, and often time refuse paying that, and my interfering occasions an immediate complaint."

The enormities arising from the Inland Trade were very eloquently described by Burke in his speech on the impeachment of Warren Hastings.

"Commerce, which enriches every other country in the world, was bringing Bengal to total ruin. The Company, in former times, when it had no sovereignty or power in the country, had large privileges under their dustuck or permit; their goods passed without paying duties through the country. The servants of the Company made use of this dustuck for their own private trade, which, while it was used with moderation, the native government winked at in some degree; but when it got wholly into private hands, it was more like robbery than trade. These traders appeared everywhere; they sold at their own prices, and forced the people to sell to them at their own prices also. It appeared more like an army going to pillage the people, under pretence of commerce, than anything else. In vain the people claimed the protection of their own country courts. This English army of traders, in their march, ravaged worse than a Tartarian Conqueror. The trade they carried on, and which more resembled robbery than commerce, anticipated the resources of the tyrant, and threatened to leave him no materials for imposition or confiscation. Thus this miserable country was torn to pieces by the horrible rapaciousness of a double tyranny."

Such were the enormities of the Inland Trade in which the Christian servants of the Company indulged.

Mr. Ellis's letter of the 7th October 1762, as said before, was forwarded to the Nawab, whose reply to it, dated 1st November, was received by the Governor on the 8th November, 1762. The Nawab wrote :—

"Sir, whenever that gentleman [Mr. Elis] has an opportunity, he fails not to make complaints of his business. As he has found my officers in no instance faulty, he has wrote to you the impertinencies and complaints of the washermen. You well know, sir, that the washermen pay no duties, and that the aumils have no authority to interrupt them, or prevent their washing and dressing the cloths : Was this affair really true, he would have informed *Rajah Nobitroy* of it, and he would immediately have wrote to the Aumil about it ; but as it is altogether without foundation he chose to make a false complaint to you. Do you, yourself, sir, consider this affair. Nevertheless I have sent strict orders to the Rajah, to write to the Aumil, that he on no account obstruct the currency of the Company's business ; and that, on application from the Gomasthas of the Factory, he afford them due aid and assistance."

Serious was the charge which the Nawab preferred against Mr. Ellis. That Englishman should have been at once removed from the chiefship of the factory at Patna. But perhaps it was the policy of the Calcutta authorities to keep Mr. Ellis at Patna in order to provoke hostilities with the Nawab and then get a pretext to proceed against the Nawab and bring about

another revolution which would in every way be beneficial to them.

So far the Nawab showed a strong desire to remain on terms of peace with the British. It was the latter who had assumed the aggressive attitude towards him. However, Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings, who had immensely benefited by the Nawab whom they had set up and so consequently who was their creature, were desirous to prevent a rupture with him. So they prevailed on the Council, of which at that time only four members were present at Calcutta, to send them to the Nawab and endeavour to bring about an adjustment. Accordingly they set out for Mongheer, where they arrived on the 30th November, 1762. Mr. Vansittart was under the impression that the Council had fully authorised him to settle with Meer Cassim the terms of an amicable arrangement and so he entered upon the business with him. In his letter of the 1st December, 1762, *i.e.*, the day following his arrival at Patna, Mr. Vansittart wrote to Mr. P. Amyatt and the rest of the gentlemen of the Council at Fort William that he had found the Nawab in the disposition he wished and expected, very desirous of having our respective pretensions equitably discussed and just regulations made to prevent disputes in future.

A fortnight later, that is on the 1st December, a Treaty, known as the Mongheer Treaty, was signed by the Nawab and by Messrs. Vansittart and Warren Hastings on the part of the Company. This Treaty consisted of nine articles and it must be admitted that the Nawab tried to be fair and just to the English. Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings in their letter of the 15th December 1762 to the Calcutta Council, enclosing a copy of the Mongeer Treaty, wrote :—

"We have had many conferences with the Nawab, on the subject of the late complaints, which appear to have been chiefly occasioned by the private Inland trade, or the trade from place to place, in the country. He enlarged much on the licentiousness and oppressions exercised by our gomastas,.....He argued, that the trade of those parts consisted chiefly in articles produced and sold in the country, from which former Nawabs had always restrained all Europeans, and to which he did not conceive that we would claim any right from our Firmann,

"We agree with the Nawab in opinion, that the true intent and natural meaning of the Firmann granted to the Company, was to give to them and their servants a free trade, clear of all customs, in all articles of commerce to be imported or exported by shipping. From such commerce a mutual benefit is derived to our country and to this ; but the trade from place to place in the country, in salt, betle nut, tobacco and

other commodities produced here, bringing no general benefit to the country, but to particulars only, who had the same in their hands, we do not think the Firmann can be understood to include them within the privilege of the Dustuck, or to grant us a right to trade therein, on any other footing than the natives themselves; that is, paying the usual customs to the Government; for if we had a right therein to trade custom-free, and the natives must pay, it follows, no one but ourselves could carry on any trade, which we can not suppose the firmann intended.....

"We think it would be unreasonable to desire to carry on the Inland trade upon any other footing than that of the merchants of the country; and that the attempting to carry it on free of customs, and with the Company's dustuck, would bring upon us an universal jealousy and ill will, and in the end prejudice the Company's affairs as well as our own. In the course of our conferences upon this subject, the Nawab observed, that if the English gomastas were permitted to trade in all parts and in all commodities custom free, as many of them now pretend, they must of course draw all the trade into their hands, and his customs would be of so little value to him, that it would be much more for his interest to lay trade entirely open, and collect no customs from any person whatever upon any kind of merchandise; which would draw a number of merchants into his country, and increase his revenues, by encouraging the cultivation and manufacture of a larger quantity of goods for sale; at the same time that (he added) it would effectually cut off the principal subject of disputes which had disturbed the good under-

standing between us; an object he had more than any other at heart. This scheme we discouraged all in our power, as it would immediately render the dustuck useless, and prejudice our honourable master's business by enhancing the number of purchasers; and it is an argument why we ought readily to consent to the regulation now proposed, not to risk hurting the Company's interests for our own private advantage." *

But all these words of wisdom fell on deaf ears. The Anglo-Indians were determined to ruin the Indian merchants by drawing all the trade into their hands. The Nawab had agreed that English merchants should pay a duty of nine per cent. *ad valorem* to him on all articles of Inland trade, such as salt, tobacco and betel nut. This was, of course, much less than what the Indian merchants had to pay. Clive, in his speech, March 30, 1773, said:

"The natives paid infinitely more—and that this was no remedy to the grievance of which the Nabob complained."

The selfish English were not satisfied with the Treaty of Mongeer and the concessions made in their favor. They protested loudly against that treaty, and, ignoring its terms, tried to carry on their trade free as before. So the whole commerce of

* Appendix No 32 to the Third Report, 1773, pp. 340-341.

the country was thrown into confusion, and the Nawab's finances were treatened with ruin. As he had intimated to Vansittart and Hastings, he now, as a measure of justice to his own subjects, and to prevent the breaches of the peace which began to occur almost every day, abolished all customs in his dominions. Of course he had every right to do so. But this step of the Nawab also greatly offended the selfish English merchants. The Nawab was not to blame in the least, for he was all the time willing to come to amicable arrangements with the English. In his letter of 22nd February, 1763, the Nawab wrote to Mr. Vansittart :

"You write, that concerning the Inland Trade of this country (that is to say) salt, tobacco, beetlenut, dried fish, which being purchased in this country shall be carried for sale to other parts of the country, a duty of 9 per cent. was agreed between me and you to be paid ; but that the phousdars and managers do not regard it, but that they want to put a stop to the whole trade ; likewise, that they demand duties on cloth, &c., belonging to the Company, having a dustuck with the Company's seal, and which never was known to pay duties ; .....

"The whole of the dispute is this. The merchants, &c., whose names are entered in my office, always pay duties. Now you purchase goods through their means ; therefore, the managers to the Government know not whether the goods belong to you or the merchant. Through the will of God,

your Gomastahs and houses are everywhere; therefore, why do not you purchase and sell goods through the means of your own Gomastahs, and your own houses; and if the merchants were to have no share in it, no noise or dispute could possibly arise. Goods being purchased from the merchants, who always paid duties on the goods they bought and sold, and now do not, is the cause of these disputes. Therefore you will please to defer trading with those merchants, who from former time have belonged to the Government; then there will be no disputes between your people and mine."

But this was not considered good enough by the English. They disapproved the treaty which Vansittart had concluded with the Nawab. Those members of the Council who had been serving outside Calcutta (excepting those at Patna and Chittagong) were summoned there to concert measures and plans which had for their object to annul the Mongeer Treaty and extort further concessions from Meer Cossim. On the arrival of all these Englishmen in Calcutta, their proceedings began in February and lasted till April 1763. They were themselves the complainants and they constituted themselves into judges, too, to sit in judgment on the Nawab. What their judgment was may be gathered from the following opinion of one Mr. Watts delivered at Fort William Consulation, 1st March 1763. He said :

"That by the Phirmaund and Husbull hookums the English East India Company have an undoubted right to trade in any articles produced in the Indostan Empire, either for foreign or Inland Trade, and that Dustucks ought to be given with any articles; and that Meer Mahomed Jaffer Ally Cawn, in his Treaty, has very particularly confirmed the same, for the provinces under the Subahdarry of Bengal.

"Secondly, that duties ought not to be paid to the country government on Salt, Beetle Nut, Tobacco, or any articles that have a Dustuck with them.

"Thirdly, that Dustucks be granted with such articles for the future.

"Fourthly, that no passports or certificates should be granted to Company's servants or others; but that Salt have a dustuck with it, if the sole property of a Company's servant, but not to other English inhabitants.

Fifthly, that the President, in his letter to the Nabob, has given up the privilege which the Company enjoyed by the Phirman and therefore he continued in the same sentiments as in the Consultation of the 17th January.

"Sixthly, that subjecting our English Gomastahs to the country government would entirely prevent us from carrying on our trade; nor is there any necessity for any regulations in those parts where we have an English factory, but in the distant parts of the provinces something is necessary to be established, as well to prevent our gomastah from being guilty of oppressions to the country people, as to keep the officers of the government from behaving in the manner they have lately done; and this point can only be settled between the Nabob and us."

Such was the opinion of other members of the Council and they all (excepting of course Warren Hastings,) censured Mr. Vansittart for his trying to be just and fair to the Nawab.*

In vain did Vansittart plead for the Nawab; he was looked upon as a hired advocate. The majority of the Council were against him. He had only one supporter in Mr. Warren Hastings. Of course, the councillors did not believe in, or act upon, the saying of their Master, "Do unto others", etc.

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* What his opponents thought of Mr. Vansittart's conduct is evident from the following extract of a letter to Clive, dated 26th of February 1763, written by Major Carnac :

"Mr. Vansittart's interview with the Nabob, instead of removing our grievances, has occasioned their being exceedingly multiplied, and carried beyond sufferance. He, in conjunction with Mr. Hastings, without consulting the rest of the Board, established a set of regulations, whereby a duty of 9 per cent. is laid upon all articles of inland trade without exception; and the disputes of our gomastahs and others in our employ are subjected to the decisions of the Nabob's officers. These concessions are so evidently shameful and disadvantageous to us, that it is no to be conceived they could ever have been submitted to, except by persons who were bought into them; and, indeed, it is confidently asserted, and generally believed, that Mr. Vansittart got seven lacs by his visit to Mongyr.

The Nawab did not think of employing force, but he was being provoked by the English to do so. As is evident from Major Carnac's letter to Clive, his countrymen were bent upon hostilities with the Nawab. Meer Cossim tried to do all that lay in his power to settle all the differences with the English. He wrote a letter to the Governor, dated 26th February, 1763, that

"Three demands which I formerly put to you I now again repeat. The first is, from the beginning until now the Nazim of Bengal corresponded with the Governor

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The members of the Council then at Calcutta, passed a severe minute of censure upon the President's procedure and summoned the absent members, in order to devise a speedy and effectual remedy for the complaints received from every quarter. They have been some time assembled, and have absolutely forbid the regulations being complied with, and have issued out orders to repel by force any insults that shall in future be offered, or obstructions to our trade."

Malcolm's Life of Clive, Vol. II, p. 283.

According to Mr. Vansittart (Narrative, II. 272) Major Carnac wrote all the minutes recorded by Mr. Amyatt, the chief of the opposition in Council, and that he and Mr. Ellis were the leaders of the party whose object it was to force a rupture with Casim Ali (Ibid, 233).

Elphinstone in his "Rise of British Power in India", p. 382, writes that "the Calcutta Council called in Major

of Calcutta," just as I have been aquainted with you, my friend, and am now acquainted with you, and not having a single word of correspondence with the rest of the Board.

"The second is, *viz.*, I formerly represented to you, that the Company's trade has been fixed time immemorial; at this present, besides the Company's trade, the Gomastahs of the English gentlemen have set up the trade of salt, tobacco, dried fish, timber, &c., and make purchase of the country people with force and extortion, and are continually contriving unjust disputes and wranglings with my officers; so that the poor, the inhabitants,

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Carnac, though he was not entitled to a seat at their Board except when military affairs were under discussion, but who was one of the most active,.....of the opponents to the Governor's measures. His admission to the council had a material effect at this crisis. He concurred in a resolution that the regulations made by the Governor were dishonourable to the council as Englishmen, and ruinous to their trade and the Company's; that the issue of them by the Covernor was a breach of their privileges, and that instructions should be sent to all the factories to suspend acting on them. A still more decisive stroke was suggested by Major Carnac himself; it was to call in all the absent councillors, except Mr. Ellis and the chief at Chittagong, who were at too great a distance, and by this means the persons against whose proceedings Mr. Vansittart's measures had been directed, and who each regarded him as a personal enemy, were brought together to judge of his conduct."

the merchants, and manufacturers of my country are oppressed, and both you and myself are troubled with unjust vexations. Now I say also, that your Gomastahs are to trade as in customs in the merchandizes imported and exported, which has been the practice in this country; and are to refrain from those articles of trade which perplex the revenues due to my administration, and are a cause of disputes, and be the ruin of the inhabitants and poor people.

"The third is, whether your Excellency's will is, at all events, to commit the expenses of the army, and management of the country and his Majesty's revenues, to me; and your own gomastahs are to carry on those branches of trade which were never practised in the country; and my country is to be oppressed, under pretences of trade, and the officers of my Government are to have no concern in the affairs of the administration or be allowed to say a word."

The letter of the Nawab was read at the Board on the 7th March 1763. Of course the Board did not accede to any one of the requests of the Nawab. They agreed to give him

"a full account of what has been hitherto resolved on by the Board, in consequence of the Phirmaund, and other public orders of the Court, and of the subsequent treaties, which have all been referred to, and strictly examined; and by the tenor of which the Board are determined to abide."

The Board at the same time resolved that,

"Messrs Amyatt and Hay be deputed to the Nabob with

full instructions, agreeable to the resolutions of Council; and that they do carry along with them a person who shall afterwards be resident at the Durbar, to transact such business as must necessarily occur."*

The Nawab, on the receipt of the above decisions of the Board, wrote to them on the 22nd March 1763 :—

"The affair of duties is as follows :—On account of the oppression of the English gomasthas, there has not so much as a single farthing been collected by way of duties. Nay, so far from it, you form collusions with some of my people and exact fines from others. And many merchants who ought to pay customs have carried their goods duty free through your protection. Upon this account I have entirely given up the collection of my duties, removed all chokey's wheresoever established. For why should I subject my character to be reproached without cause, on account of duties.† If any one of my people shall insist upon duties I will severely punish him. As to what you write of your grounding your rights upon the Firman and former sunnads, I have been twenty or thirty years in this country

* Fourth Report, 1773, pp. 492-493.

† The translator of the *Seir* in a footnote writes :

"The Nawab, to get rid of the persecutions of the English on their private trade, at once took to the bold and comprehensive expedient of publishing all over Bengal, a general abolition of all custom-houses, tolls, and fees; and of granting a general indiscriminate exemption to all traders whatsoever. Could anything be fairer with regard to the

and I am perfectly well acquainted with the nature thereof. But you ought to remember that your gomastahs until the time of Meer Mahamed Jaffir Cawn traded only in some certain articles. Nay altho' I stood your friend you were unable to provide ten or twenty timbers from Chittagong for building, but now in my administration your gomastahs make so many disturbances and are guilty of so great injuries that I cannot enumerate them. Judge therefore from these circumstances who is the oppressor and who the oppressed."

It can not be denied that the Nawab had just grievances against his European friends. Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings gave their opinion as follows before the Board on 24th March :

"It has however been determined by the majority of the Board, that we shall trade in all articles custom free, as well as from place to place in the country as in foreign imports and commodities for exportation, which resolution being declared to the Nabob he on his part has determined to take customs in general and lay trade entirely open. We cannot think him to blame in this proceeding nor do we see how he could do otherwise, for although it may be for

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English ?.....Here the Nawab suspected that the general exemption would infallibly favour only his own subjects, who living and subsisting so much on a lower scale than the English, would infallibly undersell them in all the markets, and of course expel them from everywhere. But this was at once guessed by the English of those times." .....(P. 469, Vol. II. Calcutta reprint).

our interest to determine that we will have all the trade in our hands, that we will employ our own people to make salt, take every article of the produce of the country off the ground at the first hand, and afterwards send it which way we please, free of customs ; we say, though it may be for our interest to make this unlimited use of our force, yet it is not to be expected the Nawab will join with us in endeavouring to deprive every merchant of the country of the means of carrying on their business, which must undoubtedly soon be the case if they are obliged to pay heavy duties, and we trade in every article on the footing before mentioned. Neither in our opinion could the Nawab in such circumstances collect enough to pay the expense of the chokeys, collectors, &c., so that trade would be liable to clogs and interruptions, without any benefit to the Government."

The councillors, excepting Vansittart and Warren Hastings, were indignant at this just action of the Nawab. They being

"of opinion that the Nawab as Subah had no authority to take such a step ; that it was done with a view to prejudice the Company's business, and counteract the measures which the Board had been taking for the welfare of trade in general.*

It was resolved, as mentioned before, to depute Messrs. Amyatt and Hay to the Nawab at Mongyr. When the intelligence arrived that the Nawab

* Wheeler's Early Records of British India, p. 309.

had abolished all internal duties for two years, it was further resolved by the Council that the gentlemen whom they were about to depute should insist on the Nawab's revoking that sunnud, and collecting duties as before.

Messrs. Amyatt and Hay were selected to proceed on deputation to the Nawab at Mongyr. The Council furnished them with instructions which, according to Vansittart *, authorised no negotiation or concession, and confined the functions of the deputies to enforcing and insisting on the demands already made, with the addition of some very unacceptable articles. He refused to receive the deputation headed by Mr. Amyatt, who was his declared enemy. The Nawab's letters, as Vansittart remarks, were those of a despairing man; and very probably he made up his mind to go to war with the English, for he had by this time probably become convinced of the latter's design to force him into a quarrel so as to afford a pretext to depose him. If he did so, he was not wrong; for such were the designs of the English. Mr. Elphinstone writes:

"Hostile intentions had been imputed to him from the

* Narrative Vol. III, pp. 128–135. See also third Report 1773, Appendix No. 40, p., 347.

moment of his accession; his exertions to improve his army, his attempts to call in the dues of his treasury, everything that had a tendency to increase his own efficiency, was supposed to be designed against the English. Yet his conduct in other respects was irreconcilable to such a notion. He carried on no intrigues with European powers, made no overtures to the Marattas, and was less conciliating towards Shah Alam and Shuja-u-Doula than the British themselves desired. He made enemies of all his Zamindars, and, at the crisis of his dispute with the English, he undertook the distant and dangerous expedition to Nepal. Except in prematurely acting on the agreement regarding customs, he conducted himself under innumerable provocations with temper and forbearance, only showing as much firmness as seemed likely to repress encroachment, and it was not till the disappointment of all hope of support from England and the unqualified submission of Mr. Vansittart to his enemies, that he showed the least inclination to resort to the desperate expedient of taking up arms in his defence. The state of his mind is shown by two letters which he wrote to the Governor some days after the departure of the mission. In the first, dated April 11, he expresses his uneasiness at Mr. Amyatt's visit, and requests that his escort may not exceed one or two companies, and in the other (April 15) he exclaims against the duplicity of the government, which, while professing peace and friendship, have sent their troops in several divisions through hills and forests towards his capital. At this time not a soldier had moved, but he was prepossessed with the idea that Mr. Amyatt's mission was like that of Mr. Vansittar's to Mir Jafir, and that the scene which led to his own elevation was about to be repeated at his downfall.

"Had he known the resolutions taken by the Board the day before that of his last letter (April 14), he would have had some ground for his apprehensions. On that day a force was ordered to be prepared for service, and Mr. Ellis was warned that he might expect orders to take possession of the city of Patna".*

Meer Cossim after all consented to receive the deputation. So on the 15th May Amyatt and Hay had an interview with him at Mongyr. This was more or less a ceremonial visit. But ten days later, the deputies presented their demands in writing.

"They were eleven in number, and included a written recognition of the Council's decision about customs and agents, a reimposition of the duties on the Nabob's subjects, compensation to all who had suffered by the interference with the English trade, punishment of the Nabob's officers, and many other unpalatable articles, all couched in the most peremptory language." †

Of course, no prince possessing any sense of self-respect could have acceded to these demands. But to compel the Nawab's compliance, the English were preparing to appeal to force. They had already warned Mr. Ellis to attack and capture Patna. And they, it seems, also sent a supply of arms laden in boats to Patna. The arrival of

* Rise of British power in India, pp. 391-390.

† *Ibid*, p. 393.

these boats at Monghyr alarmed the Nawab and he very properly ordered to detain them. When the news of the detention of these boats reached Calcutta, the councillors met and wrote to the Nawab that his conduct was a declaration of war. Messrs. Amyatt and Hay were instructed to return to Calcutta and Mr. Ellis was directed to assault and capture Patna.

The Nawab opened negotiations with Shuja-u-dowla, the ruler of Oude, and had his troops disciplined by the Armenian officers.

According to his orders from Calcutta, Mr. Ellis surprised and carried Patna by escalade on the night of the 24th June. Mr. Amyatt was permitted to return to Calcutta, but Mr. Hay was kept as a hostage at Mongyr. The Nawab was incensed at the conduct of Mr. Ellis, and he, not without some justification, ordered the massacre of all the English in his dominions.

Under the Armenian officer Marcar the Nawab sent troops to Patna to drive out Ellis and the English force from that place. Marcar succeeded in his expedition. Patna was recovered. Ellis and other Europeans were brought captives to Mongyr.*

* Seir-ul Mutakherin, Vol. II, pp. 467 et seq. (Calcutta reprint of 1903). See also Long's Records, page 327.

Mr. Amyatt had been permitted to leave Mongyr, but it seems that he was waylaid and killed near Cossimbazar. From the records it is not certain whether his murder was premeditated or merely accidental.*

On learning the death of Mr. Amyatt, the Calcutta Board wrote a letter to Meer Cossim censuring his conduct and informing him that he was dethroned from the musnad of Bengal. These Christian gentlemen had as early as 20th June determined in the event of a rupture to reinstate Meer Jaffer.

On the 7th of July was issued the proclamation of war against Meer Cossim and of restoration of Meer Jaffer to the musnad of Bengal. Messrs

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* See Vol. II, p. 476 (Footnote by the translator of the Seir, Calcutta reprint).

"The Nawab's order being to send Amyatt with his retinue to Monghyr, Mahomed Taky-ghan betook himself to the following expedient, to execute the commission with ease, and without tumult. Being then encamped on the Bagkaty, between Murshidabad and Cassimbazar, as soon as the boats were descried, he sent his friend and steward, Aga-aaly-toork, to invite Amyatt to an entertainment. Amyatt excused himself, and continued pushing in the middle of the stream. Another message was sent by a person of still greater consequence, who represented, that the entertainment being ready, the general would think

Warren Hastings and Verelst stood neutral regarding the war, thinking it to be unjust.

Meer Cossim's letter of the 28th June was received on the 7th July at Calcutta. In this letter he wrote :—

"In my heart I believed Mr. Ellis to be my inveterate enemy, but from his actions I now find he was inwardly my friend, as appears by this step which he has added to the other. Like a night robber he assaulted the Killa of Patna, robbed and plundered the bazar and all the merchants and inhabitants of the city, ravaging and slaying from the morning till the 3rd pahur (afternoon) ; then I requested of you 200 or 300 muskets laden on boats, you would not consent to it. This unhappy man in consequence of his inward friendship favored me in this fray and slaughter with all the muskets and cannon of his army, and is himself relieved and eased from his burden, since it never was my desire to injure the affairs of the Company ; whatever loss may have been occasioned by this unhappy man to myself in this temult, I pass over, but you gentlemen must answer for any injury

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himself aggrieved by the disappointment. Amyatt, having again excused himself, the envoy returned ; and on his landing, the boat-men were hailed from shore, and *ordered* to bring to. This order was answered by two musket-balls, and then by a volley, which being answered from shore, the boats were immediately boarded, and such a scene of slaughter ensued, as is hardly to be described ; as Amyatt, by his eternal instigations, as well as by his very haughty temper, was reputed the author of the rupture."

which the Company's affairs have suffered, and since you have unjustly and cruelly ravaged the city and destroyed the people, and plundered effects to the value of lacs of rupees, it becomes the justice of the Company to make reparation to the poor, as formerly was done for Calcutta. You gentlemen were wonderful friends. Having made a treaty to which you pledged the name of Jesus Christ, you took from me a country to pay the expenses of your Army, with the condition that your Troops should always attend me, and promote my affairs. In effect you kept up a force for my destruction, since from their hands such events have proceeded. I am entirely of opinion that the Company favours me, in causing to be delivered to me the rents for three years of my country. Besides this, for the violences and oppressions exercised by the English Gomastahs for several years past in the Territories of the Nizamut, and the large sums extorted, and the losses occasioned by them, it is proper and just that the Company make restitution at this time. This is all the trouble you need to take. In the same manner as you took Burdwan and the other lands, you must favor me in resigning them."*

The Nawab's letter was no doubt couched in sarcastic language. But the systematic manner in which the English had ill-treated and insulted him, no doubt made his temper sour. Mr. Ellis's attack on Patna was unjustifiable and unprovoked. And so there was every justification for the tone

* Long's Selections, pp. 325-326.

which the injured Nawab assumed towards his quondam Christian friends.

Appendix.

The chapter on "Mir Cassim and His Rule" was written long before the publication of "*Calendar of Persian Correspondence*" in three volumes. As these contain letters from and to the Nawab Mir Cassim and the Governor which throw additional light on the Transactions narrated in this chapter, some important extracts are made from those volumes and given in this Appendix.

In the Introduction to Vol. III of *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* (p. x), Maulvi Badrud-Din Ahmad writes that Mir Cassim's

"difficulties were increased by the overbearing insolence of the Company's servants.....The Company's servants not only asserted that they were entitled to carry on private trade duty-free, but sold this stolen privilege to other native traders.....The public revenue was thus shamefully defrauded,.....But that was not all : the *Nazim* began to suspect that the English were secretly negotiating with the Emperor to acquire the *Divani* of his dominions, and so wrest the revenue administration of his country from his hands altogether.

"A duty of 9 per cent. on the prime cost in one lump sum was imposed upon the inland trade of the Company's servants. It had been agreed to by one of their own representatives, Henry Vansittart, the Governor, but no

sooner had Vansittart published the agreement to the Council than the whole body denounced it in the most vehement terms. Not a pice, they declared, would they pay on any commodity, except the duty of 2½ per cent. on salt, the only duty to which the *Nazim* in their opinion was entitled. Warren Hastings alone sided with the Governor in upholding the justice of the agreement against the clamours of blind self-interest. Every attempt at conciliation only produced more hectoring; every effort to obtain a fair settlement was met with obstruction, until at length the *Nazim* resolved on a bold step. He abolished all duties, and so placed his own subjects on an equal footing with the Company's servants. This was too much for his opponents, who at once declared war upon him. William Ellis, Chief of Patna factory, a hot-headed, nervous man with exaggerated ideas of the dangers of his own situation, captured the town. What followed, is a matter of common history."

Mir Cassim came to understand the perfidious character of his Christian allies. He complained bitterly of their want of scruples and the manner in which he, his officers and subjects were being treated by them. Justice and right were on his side, but faithlessness was on that of the English. The Nawab wrote to the Governor, on February 22, 1763

"that the *Tilangas* (Indian sepoys) were entertained in the Company's service to punish their common enemies. He did not imagine that they would be sent against him. The Governor's giving credit to the complaints of the

Gumashtas, sending *tilangas*, and then forwarding His Excellency a translation of those complaints is 'shameful'." *

Again, in another letter bearing the same date, he wrote to the Governor that he

"understands that a number of the (English) gentlemen intend to set up another *Subadar*. It is of no consequence to His Excellency whoever succeeds him..... Has given 50 *lakhs* of rupees in land for the maintenance of *tilangas*. It is amazing that the (English) gentlemen are collecting troops to ruin His Excellency's country. Says that it is evident to everyone that Europeans can not be trusted."†

The Governor wrote to the Nawab, in reply to the above letter :

"The story that the English want to set up another *Nazim* is a fabrication of designing men whose wish it is to create a disturbance in the country for their private ends."‡

Of course, what the Governor wrote was not true.

In reply to the above letter, Mir Qasim again wrote to the Governor :

"His Excellency regards the Governor as a just man, but in this matter he is not doing justice.....A *Gumashtah* of the Company's has therefore set His

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* *Calendar*, p. 188, No. 1676.

† *Ibid*, p. 189, No. 1679.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 190, No. 1683.

Excellency's *Naib* at defiance and yet the Governor will not punish him ?.....Laments that the Governor believes every idle tale that is related to him concerning His Excellency. The Governor promised to punish mischief-makers. Mr. Ellis is one. It is amazing that the Governor does not know it."*

But the Governor was not a just man. How he was treating the Nawab and his subjects, is evident from what the latter wrote to him on 5th March, 1763.

"When His Excellency went to Behar, Bengal being left without a ruler, every village and district in that province was ruined through the oppression of the English, the subjects of the *Sarkar* were deprived of their daily bread, and the collection of the revenues was entirely stopped, so that His Excellency lost nearly a crore of rupees.....When the Governor was at Monghyr, he promised to settle all disputes between the *Sarkar* and the Company. But on his return to Calcutta, he sent troops to carry on the Company's business by force. His Excellency's officers are beaten and chastised if they dare speak a word. His Excellency has not, for these three years, received a single coin or article from the English, and yet fines and penalties are being levied upon the officers of the *Sarkar*."†

The treatment meted out to him by his European friends exhausted the patience of

* Ibid, p. 192, No. 1687.

† *Ibid*, p. 194, No. 1695

Mir Qasim. He wrote to the Governor on the 14th March, 1763 :

"It is only for friendship's sake that His Excellency has put up with everything. Now that he is being insulted by 'servants and people of no character,' his patience is quite exhausted. One may by all means be friendly to one man, but, to be dependent upon ten people is beyond one's power. Has in no way violated the agreement."*

Over and over again, the Nawab complained of the conduct of Mr. Ellis, whom he called a "mischief-monger", and asked the Governor to punish him. But the Nawab was bluntly told by the Governor, in his letter dated 17th March 1763, that he

"does not believe in any of the charges laid against Mr. Ellis. Requires proofs of what His Excellency advances. The said gentleman parades and marches troops about in order to protect the Company's business."†

The Nawab was quite disgusted with the conduct of the Governor and other members of the Council. Their intentions were now quite evident to him. The English did not hold treaties more binding than waste paper. He wrote to the Governor on 20th March 1763 :

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* *Ibid*, p. 199, No 1707.

† *Ibid*, p. 202, No 1716.

"His Excellency never gets anything by collecting duties. Moreover, they are the cause of endless disputes between him and the Company. Has therefore put an entire stop to collecting them.....Has not realised a single farthing on account of the customs, while the rents have been paid to the sepoys. The person who is to be chosen as his successor will make good those losses.....Sends back the agreement recently concluded between the Governor and His Excellency. If the old treaty has not been of any use to him, a new one can not. Will send the old treaty also if the Governor so desires."*

Again, on the 22nd March 1763, the Nawab wrote to the Governor :

"The English have combined with some of His Excellency's people and taken penalties from others..... Mr. Ellis is losing no opportunity of bringing about a rupture. It is the custom of the Europeans to change their chief every three years. His Excellency has been in office for nearly three years. The English want to have a change now, and are creating those disturbances with a view of provoking His Excellency into some rash act and so finding an excuse for deposing him."†

The English were preparing for war with the Nawab, but they wanted time, and hence they tried to lull his suspicions by protestation that "they earnestly desire to prevent such an

* *Ibid*, p. 203, No. 1718.

† *Ibid*, pp. 203–204, No. 1719.

event happening, they are sending Mr. Amyatt and Mr. Hay to negotiate a new treaty with His Excellency."*

And again, on 1st April 1763, the Governor wrote to the Nawab, that "the Council are willing to accede to his just demands."†

The Nawab was no longer to be soothed with the smooth promises and fair words of the Governor. The Governor was wrath with the Nawab for calling the members of the Council "servants" and "men of low character." In justification of his making use of those expressions, the Nawab wrote to the Governor, on 2nd April, 1763 :

"With regard to his calling the gentlemen of the Council 'servants' and 'men of low character,' asks the Governor to consider whether such people as are sending sepoys to seize the officers of the *Sarkar* and are creating disturbances, are of low character or not."‡

In the same letter he also wrote that "the Governor has sent people into the country and created disturbances. It appears that he is not willing to help His Excellency but wants to

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* *Ibid*, p. 204, No. 1720.

† *Ibid*, p. 204, No. 1721.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 206.

set up another Nawab. As to mercantile affairs, His Excellency has relinquished everything, and there remains nothing for Mr. Amyatt to negotiate. The question of the revenues can be settled with His Excellency's successor."

The Nawab was fully justified to write to the Governor, on April 19, 1763, that

"His Excellency pays the expenses of the Company's army, and the only favour shown him is that his officers are being seized and beaten. It is the English who are ready to make war on him. Has no objection to receiving Mr. Amyatt and Mr. Hay if they are accompanied by only one or two companies of sepoys. Remarks that on one side the Governor is taking violent measures; while on the other, he is sending a deputation to confer with His Excellency. A conference attended with such violences was never heard of in any country. As to the Governor's saying that *besides* the articles of customs, the orders lately issued by His Excellency are not consistent with the Company's rights and privileges. His Excellency wants to know if he is an *amil* or a *wadahdar*, or a Zamindar or a *Gumastah*, or a *Mutsaddi*, that he cannot issue orders about anything excepting the customs."*

The English were bent upon forcing a new treaty on the Nawab. Regarding this he wrote to the Governor :

* *Ibid*, p. 207, No 1730.

"To make a new treaty every year is contrary to rule, for the treaties of men have lives."*

He stated his case why his allies deposed Mir Jafar and placed him on the masnad of Bengal. He narrated all that he had done for the Company of Christian Merchants. He wrote :

"Notwithstanding that His Excellency had done so much for the Company, the English bind and carry away his officers, speak whatever comes into their mouths, and place guards upon his houses and forts."†

But his Christian friends to whom he wrote were not noted for the possession of any sense of gratitude, honour, honesty or justice and fair dealings.

War being inevitable, the Nawab made what preparations he could for it. He knew that six years previously it was the intrigues of the English with Jagat Seth and others of his family which brought disaster on Siraj-ud-dowla. It was expedient, therefore, to confine those Hindus so that they might not be in a position to commit any mischief. So he removed Jagat Seth and his brother Sarup Chand to

* *Ibid*, p. 209, No. 1737. It is stated in the *Calendar* that this "was in the Nawab's own hand."

† *Ibid*, p. 208–209 No. 1736.

Monghyr. The English had no right to complain of this procedure of the Nawab. Yet the Governor wrote to him on April 24, 1763, that

"The Seths are men of high rank and the treatment meted out to them is extremely improper. It is, moreover, a violation of the agreement and reflects dishonour upon His Excellency and the Governor.....

"The Seths are merchants and have never interfered in the business of the *Sarkar*. The story that they are in alliance with the English is utterly false."*

In reply to the above, the Nawab wrote to the Governor on May 9, 1763,

"that he is justified in having them seized and brought to Monghyr. On His Excellency's accession to the *masnad*, they agreed to live with him and assist him in the affairs of the *Nizamat*. But notwithstanding that he repeatedly sent them invitations, they refused to come, put a stop to their own business, threw the affairs of the *Nizamat* into utter confus ion, and treated him as an enemy."

Then, in a postscript in his own hand, he added :—

"The treaty does not allow the English to interfere on behalf of the dependants of the *Sarkar*, and yet they do it." †

The Nawab, after all, received Mr. Amyatt

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* *Ibid*, p. 211, Nos. 1745, 1747.

† *Ibid*, p. 216, No. 1771.

and Mr. Hay, who delivered a list of demands numbering 11 in all.* On receipt of this list of demands, the Nawab wrote to Mr. Amyatt that he

"will reply to the Company's demands in two or three days. Desires in the mean time no unpleasant conversation should take place between them. Invites him to an entertainment arranged in his honour."†

The Nawab exhibited his signs of good breeding and courtly manners in inviting the Envoy of the Company to an entertainment and preventing any unpleasant conversation taking place between them. But it did not suit the taste of that representative of the Company. It was not improbable that the Nawab would have amicably settled the differences with the Company had the Envoy treated him with a little courtesy and tact. But the tone in which he couched the reply to the Nawab's letter of invitation shows him to be wanting in good breeding and manners. Mr. Amyatt's letter was dated May 25, 1763,‡ in which he did not comply with the request of the Nawab.

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* *Ibid*, p. 218, No. 1778E.

† *Ibid*, p. 219, No. 1779.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 219, No. 1789. See also p. 220. No. 1783.

After such behaviour of the Envoy, the Nawab did not see his way to comply with any of the demands made on him by the Company. The next day, (i. e. the 26th May, 1763) after the receipt of Mr. Amyatt's letter, the Nawab sent his reply to the Company's demands.*

On receipt of the Nawab's reply, Messrs. Amyatt and Hay wrote to him :

"Are sorry to learn that His Excellency has not complied with a single demand of theirs."†

In reply, the Nawab wrote back :

"Asks to which article he has not returned a satisfactory answer. Has never impeded the Company's trade. Is ready to perform his agreement. But if the English make new demands every month and invent excuses for making war on him, he is without remedy. Even the meanest person would not choose to give his good name and honour to the winds. Mr. Amyatt has not yet listened to his grievances and is going away without settling anything."‡

On June 2, 1763, the Nawab wrote to the Governor :

"The Company's demands are unreasonable and con-

* *Ibid*, p. 220, No. 1784.
† *Ibid*, p. 221, No. 1785.
‡ *Ibid*, p. 221, No. 1786.

trary to former treaties.....Desires that the English troops at Patna may either be recalled to Calcutta or stationed at Monghyr, else he will relinquish the *Nizamat.*"*

On June 3rd, 1763, the Nawab wrote to the Governor :

"Messrs. Amyatt and Hay refuse to listen to his representations. They say that instead of removing the troops from Patna, they will reinforce them, and that if the Nawab wants war, the English are ready.....Is desirous of coming to terms with the English, but can not see his way thereto. His patience is almost exhausted."†

The English wanted war, and so they did not heed any of the representations of the Nawab.

THE WAR WITH MEER CASSIM.

The English did everything in their power to exasperate Meer Cassim and provoke him to hostilities. But to his credit it should be said that he did nothing which would lead to breach of the peace with them. He was the aggrieved party and yet he bore his grievances and the wrongs inflicted on him by the English with great patience. It was the English who were the first to commence hostilities and the

* *Ibid*, p. 222. No. 1789.
† *Ibid* p. 222, No. 1793.

conduct of Mr. Ellis in attacking Patna was quite unjustifiable. But now that Mr. Ellis was defeated and the British officers and the troops under them were prisoners in the hands of Meer Cassim, and Mr. Amyatt had been killed, the English proclaimed their war openly against Meer Cassim. They did not, like Mr. Ellis, any more resort to treachery. Although the Calcutta Councillors were for war, Mr. Vansittart was opposed to it. The author of the *Seir* writes that at a meeting of the Council, Mr. Vansittart

"produced a note, in which he observed, 'that Mr. Ellis, with a multitude of Englishmen, officers, civilians, and soldiers, being in Meer Cossim's power, no doubt could be entertained, but all these unfortunate men would be made away with, the moment the Nawab should know for certain that an army had come out of Calcutta for his ruin. Is it not then proper and prudent, added the Governor, to endeavour to live upon some terms with that merciless, sanguinary man, until the prisoners can be recovered out of his hands? After which, it would be time to proceed on projects of war and revenge.' This reasonable speech made no effect; and, as the Councillors greatly suspected their Governor, and thought themselves so certain of his being Meer Kassim's protector that they ascribed to artifice and to design the temporising policy he had just now proposed, they rose up in the utmost violence of passion, and

taking the paper on which Vansittart had written his proposal, they added at the bottom of it, *that were all the prisoners to a man killed by Meer Cassim they would not for a moment recede from their proposed revenge, or ever come to terms of accommodation with it.* After saying to much, they all put their names to it."*

Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings entered their minutes of dissent.†

Major Adams was ordered to take command of the troops and instructed to proceed with caution, and leave nothing in his rear which might in any manner endanger the settlement.

The Nawab's army was placed under the command of Taky Khan, who was a brave and talented officer but was unfortunately hampered in all his movements and proposals by Syed Mahmed Khan, Deputy Governor of Murshidabad.

The troops of the English proceeded from Calcutta and those of the Nawab from Monghyr and other places to Murshidabad.‡ It is not necessary to mention in detail all the fightings and skirmishes which took place between these two troops. The reader may turn with advantage

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* Vol. II, p. 478–479 (Calcutta Reprint).

† Third report, 1773, p. 359.

‡ For a description of the Nawab's troops, see Broome's History of the Bengal Army, pp. 351 *et seq.*

to the pages of the *Seir* or Broome's History of the Bengal Army for a description of all these fightings, which ended in the defeat of the Nawab's troops and death of Taky Khan. From the *Seir*, it is also evident that there were traitors—and the name of one at least, Mirza Iraj Khan, is mentioned—in the camp of Meer Cassim through whose treachery the Muhammadans were betrayed. The English were victorious not so much by the strength of their swords as by means of the traitors whom they had raised in the camp of their enemy.*

The death of his able general Taky Khan and the several reverses greatly depressed Meer

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* Thus, regarding the much disputed battle of Sooty, the translator of the *Seir*, in a footnote to page 489, Vol. II (Calcutta reprint), writes:—

"Several officers that had been in that engagement, affirmed a few days after the battle, that the English had really been defeated at Sooty, but for the turn which the engagement took in the end. But at Murshidabad, and at Calcutta, the universal report was, that two hundred Europeans, of all nations, who served the enemy's artillery, could not behold the distress of the English, without being affected, and that they passed all to their side. It was even said that they were hailed by the English officers, and asked whether they were not Europeans as well as themselves."

Cossim. He resolved to make his last stand at a place called Oodwah Nullah.* In choosing this place Meer Cossim showed his great military genius and sagacity, for he could not have chosen a better spot to defend himself, since nature itself has strongly fortified it. And Meer Cassim himself did all that human ingenuity could conceive or suggest to make this spot strong. He was a capable administrator, and although he himself never sought a quarrel with the English he had been making every preparation to meet such an emergency should it arise.

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* The author of the *Seir* thus describes the place :—

"The Ooda is a little deep river that comes from the hills of Raj-mahal on the south, and empties itself in the Ganga in a small plain covered with thorns and brambles. Its banks are steep, lofty, and so beset as to afford no passage anywhere but with extreme difficulty, if at all; and it was upon that little river that Meer Cossim had ordered a bridge of brick and stone work to be raised some months before. He had seen and admired the natural strengh of that part, and had ordered a deep ditch to be dug beyond the little river, and a strong rampart or intrenchment to be raised behind it, so as that the ditch and rampart might extend from the foot of the hills down to the Ganga, leaving between them and the little river, a sufficient plain for encamping troops. The ditch was

Broome in his History of the Bengal Army has mentioned all the steps which Meer Cassim took to reform and raise the efficiency of his troops. Regarding the muskets with which Meer Cassim's troops were armed, the above-named author writes:

"The muskets with which they were armed were manufactured in the country, and from trials subsequently made between them and the Tower-proof arms of the Company's troops, the reader will be surprised to learn, that they were found superior to those of English manufacture, particularly in the barrels, the metal of which

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deep, had a wooden bridge over it, and joined a lake and morass which, coming from the foot of the hills, encompassed a great part of the intrenchment, and greatly contributed to its defence in front; so that the only passage betwixt Monghyr and Raj-mahal lay over that ditch and through that intrenchment, which was fortified with a number of towers, that gave it the appearance of a castle. Nor was it possible to go to the right, unless indeed by mounting or descending the Ganga in boats; and this was impracticable, when there were troops to oppose such an attempt; nor indeed to the left, unless by wading through an impassable morass, or by climbing over the hills. It was in consequence of such considerations as these that Meer Cossim had beforehand ordered that spot to be carefully fortified, considering it as fully capable to stop an enemy." Vol. II, pp. 491–492, Calcutta Edition).

was of an admirable description; the flints also were of a very excellent quality, composed of agates found in the Rajmahal Hills, and were much preferred to those imported." P. 351.

There was one defect in his organization which, like poison, proved fatal to his cause. That defect was the enlistment of Christians in his army and placing troops under the command of Christian officers. Since the days of the early Crusaders, the Christians have been waging war against the Mussalmans. The followers of the Cross have wiped out the independent existence of numerous states of the Crescent and have placed their yoke on the necks of the followers of Muhammad. Under such circumstances Christians can never be faithful to or ever serve loyally their Muhammadan masters. The ignorance of this truth has caused many a Muhammadan the loss of his life and of his earthly possessions. Meer Cossim unfortunately not knowing this truth had entertained many a Christian in his service and this caused him the loss of his Subahdaree.

The position of Meer Cossim was so strong at Uodwa-Nullah that it was impossible for the English to make any impression on it by all the weapons of precision and destruction and other military resources they had at their command. For one month they encamped in

front of it and yet they failed to do any injury to Meer Cossim's intrenched garrison. It was certain that by no fair means would they be able to capture Oodow-Nullah.

On the other hand, night after night the camp of the English was surprised by the Nawab's men, which will be presently related.

It was unfortunate that the Nawab's officers and men, deeming their position quite secure against any sudden attack of their enemy, failed to take those precautionary measures which are always taken in time of war. According to the *Seir* they

"trusted so much to the natural strength of that post, and to the impracticability of the enemy's forcing this passage, that they became negligent in their duty; for most of the officers that had any money, made it a practice, on the beginning of the night, to gorge themselves with wine, and to pass the remainder of it in looking at the performances of dance-women, or in taking them to their beds."*

Wine and women were the cause of the ultimate destruction of these troops of Meer Cossim. But there was at least one officer in his forces at Oodow-Nulla who was not addicted

* Vol. II, p. 496 (Calcutta reprint).

to debauchery and drunkenness. The name of this officer was Najeef Khan. Being of sober habits, he employed his time and found means to harass the English To quote the author of the *Seir* again :

"On reviewing often the intrenchment in that part which touched to the foot of the hills, he had picked an important intelligence from many of the highlanders, namely, that at that particular part there was a ford through the lake and morass, which led safely to the English encampment. Mirza Nujuf Khan, upon this intelligence, came out at about three o'clock in the morning, and falling upon that part of the English camp, (and there Mir Jafer Khan had his quarters) he occasioned so much tumult and consternation in it, that the old Nawab fled to his boats, and was going to drop down the river, when the English sent a body of Talingas to his assistance. On sight of these, Nujuf Khan, who had made an ample booty, returned within the intrenchment again."*

Nujuf Khan made such sorties on the English camp every night. The English, annoyed at these sorties, set about examining from whence Nujuf Khan and his men could possibly come out. They were themselves unsuccessful in their attempt. But good luck always attended them and so it did on this occasion, too. Writes the *Seir* :

* *Ibid.*

"The path by which Nujuf Khan used to make his sorties, had been taken notice of by an English soldier, who having fled from his own nation, had been long ago in Mir Cossim's service. This man, who, according to the rules of service amongst the English, would have been put to death had he fallen in their hands, had set out in the darkness of the night, and had gone through the ford, setting several marks on his passage; and, being come out upon dry ground, he approached within hearing of the English sentries, and cried out in the English language, 'That he was such a one; and that if they would procure his pardon, he would find means to carry his brethren over the intrenchment.' Fortune sided with this man. There happened to be upon duty at that part some English officers, who recollected his voice, and these assured him, with a solemn oath, that his life would be safe, and that he might come over in full safety. Upon these assurances, he marched up to them, informed them of what he had observed, and on a certain night he promised to return, and to shew them the ford. This interval was employed by the English in providing ladders and every requisite for an assault and escalade. At the appointed time, which was about ten o'clock at night the man made his appearance, ..."*

On the night of the 4th September, the English traitor in the employ of Meer Cossim, the soldier who had deserted the colors of his country once, went to the camp of the English and conducted them along the ford

* Ibid, p. 497.

to the intrenchments within the Oodow-Nullah. Meer Cossim's officers and men, after debauchery and orgies, were fast asleep when the English entered their intrenchments and made a "battue" of them. According to the English translator of the *Seir*, Meer Cossim lost full fifteen thousand men in that surprise and flight.

Oodow-Nullah was the last hope of the Muhammadan Nawabs to regain their independence and throw off the yoke of the British merchants. But alas! that hope was gone for ever by the treachery of a Christian soldier. What Plassy was to Siraj, Oodow-Nullah proved to Meer Cossim. In both the places, the English were victorious, not by the valor of their arms, but by treachery and other means which will not bear scrutiny.

Although Meer Cossim had disciplined his army and equipped his men with the most recent arms, his failure in all the battles against the English is to be attributed to his absence from the scenes of action. English historians consider this to be due to his want of physical courage or cowardice. Whether it proceeded from that cause or any other, it is impossible to say. But this much is certain that the disasters which befell his forces would

not have occurred had he remained present in person with them. In the East, soldiers look to their sovereign for support and to inspire them with courage and hope. The debaucheries and orgies in which Meer Cassim's officers and men so freely indulged in the intrenched camp at Oodow-Nullah would never have been attempted by them, had he been present there. And no one would have dared to neglect his duty had Meer Cossim remained with the headquarters of the troops. Bolts in his "Consideration on Indian affairs," (p. 43) writes ;—

"And had not his (Meer Cossim's) subordinate commanders proved deficient in personal courage, or even had he himself had the bravery to animate his troops properly by his own presence in the field, it is more than probable that, the English Company would have been left, from that day, without a single foot of ground in these provinces."

Another mistake which Meer Cassim committed was to entertain Christians in his service, both as officers and soldiers. Some instances of the manner in which his Christian employees betrayed his interests have already been mentioned before. The trust which he reposed in European and Armenian Christians was the cause of his ruin. One of his commanders, and that too of an important arm of service, was an Armenian, by name Coja Gregory, called by the Mahomedan

historian's Gurgin Khan. He was a brother of Coja Petruse, a leading Armenian merchant of Calcutta. Coja Petruse employed all his talents and influence in tampering with the fidelity of his co-religionists in the service of the Nawab, and to further the cause of the English. He himself admitted this in his letter to the President of the Calcutta Board. Long in his *Records* (p. 339) writes :—

"Petruse Aratoon or Coja Petruse was suspected by Major Adams to have been a spy for the Nawab and was seized as such and ill treated ; however he vindicated his character to the Government. His brother commanded the Artillery of the Nawab at Patna, and was subsequently murdered there, the Nawab suspecting him of being too friendly to the English, Had he been alive, the massacre might have been prevented through his influence."

The very opening sentence of the petition which this Armenian wrote in defence of his loyalty ran as follows :—

"Your petitioner begs leave to observe to this Hon'ble Board, at Ouda Nulla, a place where the enemy had strong works and great forces, your petitioner by direction from Major Adams wrote two letters to Marcan and Arratoon, two Armenian officers, who amongst others commanded the enemy's forces, and intimated to them that as the English always favored and protected the Armenian nation, so the Armenians in justice ought to direct their steps towards the good of the English."

It is quite evident then that the Nawab's garrison at Oodow-Nullah was betrayed by the foul treachery of the Armenians.

After the capture of Oodow-Nullah, Meer Cassim fled precipitately to Mongheer, which he had very strongly fortified. It was from here that he wrote a letter dated 7th September 1765 to the Calcutta authorities.

"That for these three months you have been laying waste the King's country with your forces, what authority have you? If you are in possession of any royal sunnud for my dismission you ought to send me either the original or a copy of it, that having seen it and shown it to my army, I may quit this country and repair to the presence of His Majesty. Although I have in no respect intended any breach of public faith, yet Mr. Ellis regarding not Treaties or Engagements in violation of public faith, proceeded against me with treachery and night assaults. All my people then believed that no peace or terms now remained with the English, and that wherever they could be found it was their duty to kill them. With this opinion it was that the Aumils of Moorshedabad killed Mr Amyatt. But it was by no means agreeable to me that that gentleman should be killed. On this account I write, that if you are resolved on your own authority to proceed in this business, know for a certainty that I will cut off the heads of Mr. Ellis and the rest of your chiefs and send them to you.....

"Exult not upon the success which you have gained merely by treachery and night assaults, in two or three places, over a few jemmadars sent by me. By the will of

God, you shall see' in what manner this shall be revenged and retaliated."*

To the above letter, the President sent the following reply :—

"Mr. Amyatt and Mr. Hay were sent to you as ambassodors, a title sacred among all nations, yet in violation to that title you caused Mr. Amyatt to be attacked and killed on his return, after having given him your passports, and Mr. Hay you unjustly kept as a prisoner with you. You surrounded and attacked our Factory at Cossimbazar and carried away our gentlemen from thence prisoners in a most disgraceful manner to Monghyr ; although they had no concern in the war nor resisted your people. In like manner, in all other parts, you attacked the English agents who were carrying on their trade quietly, some you killed and some were carried away prisoners and their effects were everywhere plundered. After these proceedings do you ask for what reason Major Adams was sent with an Army ? You know the laws of God and Man ; as you had declared you would turn the English out of the country and had proceeded as far as you could towards it, it became necessary for us to take measures for our own defence and for the care of our own reputation.

"To put prisoners of war to death is an act which will appear shocking and unlawful not only to Christians and Mussulmen, but to the most barbarous Pagans ; such sentiments are nowhere to be met with, but among the beasts of the forest. After the battle of Ouda Nullah above a thousand of your officers and men were prisoners in the

* Vansittart's Narratfve, Vol. III, pp. 368-9.

hands of Major Adams, who released them without the least hurt or injury."

The reply of Major Adams to Meer Cassim's letter ran as follows :—

"The English having always had in view the articles of the treaty endeavoured by pacific measures to reconcile all differences with you, till the perfidious massacre of Mr. Amyatt compelled them, contrary to their inclination, to declare war against you. You say it was not your intention to murder Mr. Amyatt, why then did you not punish the aggressors with the utmost severity? There are three months elapsed and nothing done, we have now by the assistance of Providence brought your affairs to a very low ebb. It is true you have Mr. Ellis and many other gentlemen in your power; if a hair of their heads is hurt you can have no title to mercy from the English and you may depend upon the utmost fury of their resentment, and that they will pursue you to the utmost extremity of the earth. Should we unfortunately not lay hold of you the vengeance of the Almighty cannot fail overtaking you, if you perpetrate so horrid an act as the murder of the gentlemen in your custody."

It cannot be denied that there was much force in Meer Cassim's letter; there can be no doubt that he was an aggrieved man and that he had been wronged by the British in the most shameful manner possible. The quarrel was not of his seeking, but it was forced on him by the English. The letter which was addressed to him

by them was couched in language not conciliatory in tone and meant more to irritate than soothe one's feelings. The aggressive and offensive attitude the English were the first to take. Mr. Ellis and other Englishmen who fell into Meer Cassim's hands were in reality rebels and not prisoners of war. They were caught red-handed and deserved capital punishment. But Meer Cassim weakened his position by not executing them as soon as they were captured by him, but keeping and feeding them for about three months. He cannot be blamed for taking the precautionary measure of imprisoning all the English in his dominions in order to prevent their rising against him. His subjects were so much exasperated against the English by the systematic ill-treatment they had been receiving at their hands for a number of years that they most gladly seized the opportunity and committed excesses against their persons and property. The reply which the Calcutta Board and Major Adams sent to Meer Cassim's letter was calculated to exasperate him rather than to make him forget all his past grievances. The English were conspiring against him. From Monghyr he had to retreat to Patna, carrying the English prisoners with him. So long he had not done any injury to them. But

now finding that the English treated him with studied contempt and insult, and also smelling out the conspiracy that they had been plotting against him, in his self-defence, he thought of executing them, whether those in his service or those in captivity. The first Christian who was executed was his Armenian general, Gurghin Khan. Regarding his death, the translator of the *Seir* (Vol. II, p. 502, footnote, Calcutta reprint) wrote :—

"The causes, which no one dared to mention, are a conspiracy, said to be brewing by Gurghin-qhan, incited underhand by the English. His brother, Aga-bedross, *alia* Codja-petruss, then residing at Calcutta, and an acquaintance of Governor Vensittart's, as well as of Mr. Warren Hastings, had on their joint request, wrote pressingly to his brother, to engage him by all the motives which religion and a regard for his own safety could suggest, to lay hold of the person of Mir Cassem Khan, or at least, to come himself to the English camp with his own troops and friends. But this negotiation having been somehow smelt out by Meer Cossim's head-spy, he came at one o' clock in the morning, ordered him to be waked, and laying hold of him by the arm, *What are you doing in your bed*, said he, *whilst your General, Gurghin-qhan, is actually selling you to the Frenghies? He is of intelligence with those without, and possibly with those within, with your prisoners.* Such was then the general report at that time; and, I remember, that the very purport of the letter was handed about by the Armenians of Calcutta.....This much is certain,

that it was this rumour of a conspiracy that put Meer Cossim on one hand upon dispatching his General, and, on the other, upon ridding himself of his prisoners of all sorts,.....[our author] positively says, that the English prisoners had found means to provide a quantity of money, with a sufficiency of ammunition and arms."*

The Nawab had very just reasons for being displeased with the English. They captured Mongyr by treachery. Writes the author of the *Seir* :—

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* Maharajah Kalyan Singh's *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, translated into English by Khan Bahadur Sarfaraj Hussain Khan and published in the *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (Vol. VI, pp. 127-128) gives the version of the murder of Gurgeen Khan as follows :—

"Meer Mohammad Kasim Khan had now no other alternative left him than to depart from the place (Oodoo Nulla) without delay. At about 2 A. M., he mounted an elephant in company with his evil genius the famous Gurgeen Khan and proceeded to Monghyr, followed by the remnant of his broken army. He stopped at the fort of Monghyr for two or three days, and making a thorough inspection of it left for Azimabad (Patna). In the fort he left Izzat Khan to guard it and crossing the Roha Nalla, encamped, giving orders for the construction of a bridge of boats over it. It so happened the next day that two horsemen approached Gurgeen Khan and demanded their pay. He refused to pay, but they pressed. Losing his temper, he shouted, "Is there any one who would take

"Mongher was taken in the following manner: The English laid siege to the castle; and Arab-aaly-qhan, the Governor, who was naturally a coward, and one who augured no good from his master's affairs, sent them word, that if they would give him a sum of money, he would surrender the fortress. The English, who were anxious to pursue Meer Kassim, consented to what he asked; and a certain sum having been paid the man, he gained the garrison to his party, and surrendered the place. The English put a garrison into it, and marched to Azimabad ;.....*

The English were tampering with the loyalty

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these men into custody?" Enraged at his ungentlemanly behaviour and being emboldened by the sad plight in which they found their master, they assaulted him, and cut him with their swords; and mounting their horses, escaped towards the forest."

The same author then narrates the murder of Jagat Seth and his brother Maharaja Swaroop Chand. The Mongyr Fort was surrendered to Meer Jaffar and his allies the English, by the governor of the Fort, Izzat Khan. The news of this surrender "naturally made Meer Mohammad Kasim Khan furious and in his exasperation he ordered the murder of Messrs. Ellis and Jessey, who were kept prisoners in the house of Haji Ahmed Khan, the brother of Mahabat Jang. Dr. Fullarton however was saved."

According to the same author, Azimabad Fort fell into the hands of the English without much resistance. The com-

* Vol. II, p. 508 (Calcutta reprint).

of Meer Cossim's soldiers. Adams and Carnac wrote from their camp at Colgong on the 19th Septembar, 1763, to one Monsieur Gentil in the employ of Meer Cossim as follows :—

"We are persuaded also that it must have been the most absolute necessity only which could have engaged you in so dishonorable a service to a Christian as that of the Moors, who always treat with the grossest brutality those of our religion and Europeans when it is in their power to do it with impunity. A favorable opportunity now offers to enable you to rid yourself of so irksome a slavery and to reconcile yourself with our nation, towards which you cannot deny but you have acted very improperly (and which is now at peace with yours). If you can contrive means for the delivery of our gentlemen from the power of Cossim Ally Khan and will convey them to us, you may place a firm reliance on the gratitude of the English ; and we promise you fifty thousand Rupees immediately."*

According to the *Seir*, the English prisoners of Meer Cossim

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mander "Meer Mohammad Ali Khan surrendered unconditionally and became the friend of the East India Company, from which he received a pension of Rs. 500 a month till he proceeded to Persia after some time."

It is necessary to add that Maharaja Kalyan Singh's history is not very accurate.

* Long's Records, pp. 332-333.

"had contrived, by the means of their servants, to procure abroad a number of muskets equal to their number, with ammuniton sufficient for their purpose. But they did not come to hand; for, had they succeeded in this attempt, they were resolved to make t escape by main force; and if not, to kill so many men in their own defence, as should avenge their death, and do honour to their memory."*

Under these circumstances, Meer Cossim was perhaps justified in executing the Christian prisoners who were giving him much unnecessary trouble. It should also be remembered that these Englishmen were in a sense rebels.

The task of executing these persons was entrusted to one European soldier of fortune who had acquired the nickname of Sombre, or Somro according to Indian authors. He was a German and a Protestant and afterwards married or kept the well-known Begum Samroo of Sardhana fame. Except one Dr. Fullarton, no other Englishman was left alive.†

As the English advanced towards Patna, he retired towards the river Karamnasa, which separated his dominions from those of the

* Vol. II, pp. 505–506 (Calcutta Reprint).

† For an account of this execution, see *Seir*, Vol. II. 505 (Calcutta reprint); also the third Parliamentary Report, 1773, p. 360 (Dr. Fullarton's letter to the Board).

Nawab Vizier of Oudh. He was followed up by the English and so he had at last to leave his territory and on 4th December crossed into the country of Shuja-ud-dowla.

Thus was closed the career as Subahdar of Bengal of Meer Cossim—a career which entitles him to the sympathy of all right-thinking men, because he was the victim of the tyranny and injustice of the English. He tried hard to live on terms of peace with them, but they tried to fleece him more and more. He had paid them 20 lakhs of rupees in hard cash; given them the revenues of three fertile districts of Bengal; permitted them to coin their own siccas and allowed their circulation in his dominions without paying any *Batta* on them. But they were very rapacious and grasping—nothing could satisfy their hunger for gold. They wanted to deprive him of the trade duties and subject his people to misery and ruin by taking in their hands the whole trade of the country. Even then he tried to come to terms with them; but they were not satisfied with those terms. It was they who took the offensive and provoked him into hostilities. As Meer Cossim wrote and said so often, the war was not of his own seeking but was forced

on him by them; and if they succeeded in getting the better of him, it was not by fair fight, but by treachery, corruption and fraud.

CHAPTER IV.

Restoration of Meer Jaffer.

The Council at Calcutta issued on the 7th July, 1763, the following proclamation :—

The Nawab *Meer Mahomed Cossim Alee Cawn* having entered upon and continued acts of open hostility against the English nation and the interest of the English united East India Company, we, on their behalf, are reduced to the necessity of declaring war against him ; and having come to a resolution of placing the Nawab *Meer Muhammed Jaffier Khan Bahadur* again in the Government, we now proclaim and acknowledge him as Subadar of the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa ; and further as the said *Cossim Allee Cawn* has likewise exercised acts of violence and oppressions over many of the principal merchants and inhabitants of the country, to their entire ruin, we do hereby require all manner of persons under our jurisdiction, and also invite all other officers and inhabitants of the country, to repair to the standard of *Meer Mahommed Jaffier Cawn Bahadur*, to assist him in defeating the designs of the said *Cossim Allee Cawn*, and finally establishing himself in the Subahdaree."

It is needless to point out the lies with which the above proclamation opens in its very first sentence. It was not Meer Cossim, but Mr. Ellis who entered upon and continued acts of open

hostility. By restoring Meer Jaffer to the throne of Bengal, the English in a way acknowledged the wrong and injustice they had done him. So in all fairness his restoration should have been accompanied with some compensation to him for the losses he had been made to suffer. But magnanimity and generosity are virtues which the English were strangers to. Nay, they restored Meer Jaffer to the musnad of Bengal in order to extort some more concessions and money from him. The terms of the new treaty they concluded with him were highly advantageous to them. Elphinstone writes :—

"Although the majority treated the reinstatement of this prince as a restoration to his just rights, they did not scruple to impose new and severe terms upon him. All the concessions made by Casim Ali were retained, the whole of the commercial privileges claimed by the Company's servants were insisted on, the force to be kept up by the Nabob was limited to 6,000 horse and 12,000 foot, and he was to indemnify the Company and individuals for all the damage occasioned to them by the usurper whom their own government had set up to supplant him. By a separate agreement he was to grant a donation of twenty-five lacks of rupees to the army and some gratification to the navy, which was not fixed at the time."*

* Rise of British Power in India, p. 397.

Meer Jaffer was made use of as an useful tool by the English in their war with Meer Cossim. He accompanied their army and was with them at Oodow Nullah. It was in his name that promises were made to tempt the men of Meer Cossim's army to desert their prince and come to the former Nawab's camp.

But with all these it can be very easily surmised that Meer Jaffer's lot was not a happy one. His situation as the restored Nawab was much worse than it had been before.

At the time of his restoration, Meer Jaffer insisted on having Nundcoomar as his Dewan. That man was at that time a prisoner at Calcutta under the English. So he had to be set at liberty to serve Meer Jaffer. He served him very faithfully and did all that lay in his power to advance his master's cause.

Meer Jaffer did not live long to enjoy the Nawabship.

As said before, he was being treated much worse than he had been during the first period of his Nawabship. He submitted to the Culcutta Board a paper containing his complaints. This was received by the Board on the 14th September, 1764, and in it he worte :—

"1. The officers of Colonel-gunge and Maroogunge,

which are newly established at Patna, take away by force the Merchants belonging to the Gunges of the Sircar, by which means my Gunges are desolated and I suffer a loss of a Lac of Rupees. It is proper that the aforesaid new Gunges should be forbidden, that the Gunges of the Sircar may flourish and I may not suffer any loss.

"2. The state of the Buddraca (Cutcheries into which the Government duties are paid) of Patna and the Putchootra of Moorshedabad is this, that Merchants refuse to pay the Customary duties under cover of the protection of the Englisn Factories. Be pleased to send positive orders that they should pay the customary duties into the aforesaid cutcherries and that no protection should be granted to any one.

"3. Whereas in Sircar Tirhut, and Sircar Hajypoor and Sircar Sarun, &c., and also in the Bengal province, the English Gomastahs hold farms in the name of factories and give protection to the dependants of the Sircar; by these means my Government is weakened and the affairs of the country are interrupted and prejudiced.

"4. Money belonging to the Company's factory is coined in the Mint at the rate of 2¼ per cent only. Last year it was appointed that 10,000 Rupees a month should be sent from the factory to the Mint to be coined, and that the usual duty should be paid. At present very large sums are brought into the Mint from the factory by the servants and dependants of the factory, and a duty is paid according to the factory rate, whereby a heavy loss falls upon the Sircar.

"5. The villages of Dumdumma and Seebpoor and

the village of Bummun-gatta...the Gomastahs of Cassimbazar factory have forcibly taken possession of, and do not pay a cowrie Malgoozary.

"6. The English Gomastahs...force Tobacco and other goods upon the Talookdars and Ryots, whereby the country is desolated and a very heavy loss falls upon the Sircar.

"7, There are people on the part of the English in the Forts of Patna and Monghyr, &c., whereby my authority is impaired. It is proper that the English should move out of the Forts and my people be established therein as usual ;.....

"8. The people of several Englishmen everywhere buy and sell rice and other grain in the Gunges and Golas of Bengal, whereby the foujdars and other officers are prevented from sending grain to the army.

"9. In Patna...near 40 houses designed for the reception of strangers are in the possession of several English gentlemen, so that I could not have them in case I should want them for myself and my family and dependants.

"10. The wood farm belonging to Poornea, which has hitherto paid a tribute of 50,000 Rupees a year, is now in the hands of the English, and I received not a cowrie from it, whereby I suffer a heavy loss, and my authority is weakened.....

"11. If any of the servants or dependants of the Sircar should seek for protection from the English, let it be enacted that no person shall give protection to the dependants of the Sircar or recommend the servants.

"12. "The Sepoys, who are sent from the factories into different parts of the country in consequence of

complaints, desolate the villages and put the ryots to flight by their disorders and oppressions, whereby my revenues are injured.....

"13. The poor of this country, who used always to deal in salt, betel-nut, and tobacco, &c., are now deprived of their daily bread by the trade of the Europeans, whereby no kind of advantage accrues to the Company and the Government revenues are greatly injured." *

Meer Jaffer formulated his complaints against the Company of Christian merchants under the above thirteen heads. His grievances were not sentimental but real and substantial. But as usual, the Company and their representatives in Bengal took no notice of them and so no redress was granted to him.

He gained but little by his abject submissiveness, except the transmission of the title to his family.

THE COURT OF DIRECTORS ON THE INLAND TRADE.

The Court of Directors had no interest in the Inland Trade and, therefore, they were able to pronounce their disinterested judgment on it. They of course condemned the action of the Board. It seems that the Court came to know of the

* Long's Selections, pp. 356–358.

Inland Trade from some private information. The following extracts from their letters to Bengal sufficiently disclose their views on the subject :—

THE NABOB TO BE INFORMED ACCORDINGLY.

"Unwilling as we always are to place too much confidence in private informations, yet these are too important to pass unnoticed. If what is all stated is fact, it is natural to think that the Nawab, tired out and disgusted with the ill-usage he has received, has taken this extraordinory measure, finding that his authority and government are set at nought and trampled upon by the unprecedented behaviour of our servants and the agents employed by them in the several parts of the Nawab's dominions. If we are right in our conjecture, we positively direct, as you value our service, that you do immediately acquaint the Nawab, in the Company's name, that we dissapprove of every measure that has been taken in real prejudice to his authority and government, particularly with respect to the wronging him in his revenues by the shameful abuse of Dustucks ; and you are further to inform him that we look upon his and the Company's interest to be so connected that we wish for nothing more than to have everything put on such a footing that the utmost

harmony may be promoted and kept up between us.

COLONEL CAILLAUD HONOURABLY ACQUITTED.

"Having considered with the greatest attention every circumstance of your providings with respect to the allegation against Colonel Caillaud for consenting to a proposal of the late Nawab Jaffier Ali Khan to cause the Shahzada to be seized or cut off, we are unanimously of opinion that he stands honourably acquitted of any design or intention upon or against the life of that Prince.

DISAPPROVAL OF EVERY MEASURE TAKEN AGAINST THE NAWAB.

"Although we have not received any letter from you since that which bore date the 14th February 1763, which gave us some general account of very disaggreeable altercations with the Nawab, yet private advices have been received which take notice that the Nawab having made repeated complaints of the notorious abuse of Dustucks by which he lost great part of his customs, and having obtained no redress, he at once overset the Company's servants by declaring all goods custom free, so that their Dustucks are of no use.

ALL THE NAWAB'S GRIEVANCES TO BE REDRESSED.

"In order to promote this harmony, you are most heartily and seriously to take under your consideration every real grievance the Nawab lays under, to redress them to the utmost of your power and prevent such abuses in future. And, with respect to the article of Dustucks in particular, you are hereby positively directed to confine this privilege as nearly as possible to the terms granted in the Firmans; and you are to give the Nawab all the assistance you can to reinstate him in the full power of collecting and receiving his revenues, which as Subah he is justly entitled to.

IMPATIENT FOR FURTHER INTELLIGENCE.

"We are impatient for your next advices, that we may be informed of your proceedings with respect to this important affair, and that we may give you our sentiments thereupon in a more full and explicit manner, which we hope will be before the despatch of our last letters this season.

PRIVATE TRADE THE CHIEF CAUSE OF ALL THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS WITH THE NAWAB.

"One great source of the disputes, misunderstandings and difficulties which have

occurred with the country Government, appears evidently to have taken its rise from the unwarrantable and licentious manner of carrying on the private trade by the Company's servants their Gomastas, Agents, and others to the prejudice of the Subah, both with respect to his authority and the revenues justly due to him, the diverting and taking from his natural subjects the trade in the inland parts of the country, to which neither we nor any persons whatever dependent upon us, or under our protection, have any manner of right, and consequently endangering the Company's very valuable privileges. In order, therefore, to remedy all these disorders, we do hereby positively order and direct—

ALL INLAND TRADE TO BE ABOLISHED.

"That from the receipt of this letter, a final and effectual end be forthwith put to the inland trade in salt, betelnut, tobaccos, and in all other articles whatsoever produced and consumed in the country; and that all Europeans and other agents or Gomastas who have been concerned in such trade be immediately ordered down to Calcutta, and not suffered to return or be replaced as such by any other persons.

EXPORT AND IMPORT TRADE ALONE TO BE DUTY FREE.

"That as our Firman privileges of being duty-free are certainly confined to the Company's export and import trade only, you are to have recourse to, and keep within, the liberty therein stipulated and given as nearly as can possibly be done. But, as by the connivance of the Bengal Government and constant usage, the Company's covenant servants have had the same benefit as the Company with respect to their export and import trade, we are willing they should enjoy the same, and that Dustucks be granted accordingly. But herein the most effectual care is to be taken that no excesses or abuses are suffered upon any account whatsoever, nor Dustucks granted to any others than our covenant servants as aforesaid. However, notwithstanding any of our former orders, no writer is to have the benefit of the Dustuck until he has served out his full term of five years in that station. Free merchants and others are not entitled to or to have the benefit of the Company's Dustucks, but are to pay the usual duties.

ALL AGENTS TO BE ABOLISHED. ALL TRADE TO BE CARRIED ON THROUGH THE COMPANY'S FACTORIES.

"As no Agents or Gomastas are to reside on

account of private trade at any of the inland parts of the country, all business on account of licensed private trade is to be carried on by and through the means of the Company's covenanted servants resident at the several subordinate Factories, as has been usual.

ALL PERSONS ACTING CONTRARY TO ORDERS TO BE DISMISSED THE SERVICE.

"We are under the necessity of giving the before-going orders in order to preserve the tranquility of the country and harmony with the Nawab. They are rather outlines than complete directions, which you are to add to, and improve upon, agreeably to the spirit of, and our meaning in, them, as far as may be necessary to answer the desired purpose. And if any person or persons are guilty of a contravention of them, be they whomsoever they may, if our own servants they are to be dismissed the service ; if of others, the Company's protection is to be withdrawn, and you have the option of sending them forthwith to England if you judge the nature of the offence requires it."

But when the directors were ordering their servants to make amends to the injured Nawab, Meer Cossim was a fugitive from his country. He had fled to the dominions of the ruler of Oude

whom he was instigating to invade Bengal and drive out the English from that part of India.

SHAH SHUJA'S WAR WITH THE ENGLISH.

Meer Cossim, as said before, entered the territory of the ruler of Oude on the 4th December, 1763. Shah Shujah was the Nawab Vizier of the Moghul Empire. The Emperor Shah Alam had not gone yet to Delhi, but was staying at Allahabad and so Shah Shujah was in possession of his person. Under the circumstance, the ruler of Oude was the virtual Emperor of Hindustan. It was, therefore, that Meer Cossim negotiated with him, and entered his territory after making him take a solemn oath on the Koran that he would espouse his cause and help him to regain the musnad of Bengal, Behar and Orissa.

Large were the presents which Meer Cossim made to Shah Shujah and his female relatives.* He addressed Shah Shuja's mother as his mother and so considered the ruler of Oude as his brother. The rajah of Bundelcund was giving trouble to the sovereign of Hindustan by not paying the tribute. The Moghul Empire was *in extremis*,

* Seir-ul-Mutakherin, Vol. IV, pp. 521 *et seq* (Calcutta reprint).

and so the Bundelcund chief saw his opportunity to assert his independence. The Nawab had come to Allahabad in order to send an expedition against that chief. There was some delay in the despatch of the expedition. Perhaps the timid Vizier was not sure about its success and so he was procrastinating in its despatch. But Meer Cossim considered this delay as fatal to his cause. Writes the another of the *Seir* :—

"As he feared nothing so much as a delay, the consequences of which might afford the English time enough to fix themselves firmly in their new conquests, he sent a pressing message to the Vizier on that subject. He was answered, that such an expedition could not be commenced, before the countries about Ilah-abad were brought into order. Mir Cassem replied, that if this was all that detained the Vizier, it was needless that he (Mir Cassem) should remain with so much artillery, and so many good troops uselessly encamped. Please, said he, to refer that small affair to me, your friend, and I will undertake in a little time to bring it to a conclusion with a deal of ease."*

The proposal being accepted, Meer Cossim with his trained troops, did not find any difficulty in defeating the Bundel chief, who submitted to pay the arrears of his tribute. After his successful campaign he returned to Allahabad and the Emperor and the Vizier were so pleased with the

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 523.

manner in which he conducted the expedition and brought it to a successful issue, that they acceded to his request and made every necessary preparation to march eastwards to fight the English.

Fortunately for Meer Cossim, dissensions had taken place in the camp of the English. Many European officers and soldiers as well as Indian Sepoys were deserting the Company's flag and were going over to the camp of the Vizier of the Emperor.* But unfortunately, there was no statesman on the Moslem side to take advantage of these dissensions and thus weaken the Christians. The troops of the Moslem rulers were also unruly and ungovernable. Writes the author of the *Seir* :—†

"But there was so little order and discipline amongst these troops, and so little were the men accustomed to command, that in the very middle of the camp they fought against each other, killed and murdered each other, plundered each other, and went out a-plundering and a-marauding without the least scruple or the least control. No one would inquire into those matters ; .....They behaved exactly like a troop of highwaymen. It was not an army, but a whole city in motion ; ....."

Another blunder of the troops of the Moslem

* *Ibid*, p. 524. (Calcutta Reprint, Vol. II)

† *Ibid*, p. 526.

rulers consisted in the heavy baggages which they carried with them. An Indian army to make itself comfortable always carries not only articles of necessity but also those of luxury with their camp. And this has been the cause of the disasters which have befallen many an army fighting in or out of India.

The war was undertaken with the express object of replacing Meer Cossim on the musnad of Bengal. Shuja-ud-dowla wrote the following letter to the Governor & Council :—

"Former Kings of *Indostan*, by exempting the *English* Company from duties, granting them different settlements and factories, and assisting them in all their affairs, bestowed greater kindness and honour upon them, than either upon the country merchants, or any other Europeans. Moreover of late his Majesty has graciously conferred on you higher titles and dignities than was proper, and jagheers and other favors since; notwithstanding these various favors which have been shown you have interfered in the King's country, possessed yourselves of districts belonging to the Government, such as Burdwan and Chittagong, &c., and turned out and established Nabobs at pleasure, without the consent of the Imperial Court. Since you have imprisoned dependants upon the Court, and exposed the government of the King of Kings to contempt and dishonour, since you have ruined the trade of the merchants of the country, granted protection to the King's servants, injured the revenues of the Imperial Court, and crushed

the inhabitants by your acts of violence; and since you are continually sending fresh people from Calcutta, and invading different parts of the royal dominions, and have even plundered several villages and pergunnahs belonging to the province of *Ilahabad*; to what can all these wrong proceedings be attributed, but to an absolute disregard for the Court, and a wicked design of seizing the country for yourselves? If you have behaved in this manner in consequence of your King's commands, or the Company's directions, be pleased to acquaint me of the particulars thereof, that I may show a suitable resentment; but if these disturbances have arisen from your own improper desires, desist from such behaviour in future; interfere not in the affairs of the government, withdraw your people from every part, and send them to your own country, carry on the Company's trade as formerly, and confine yourselves to commercial affairs. In this case tbe Imperial Court will more than ever assist you in your business, and confer its favours upon you. Send hither some person of distinction as your Vakeel, to inform me properly of all circumstances, that I may act accordingly. If (which God forbid) you are haughty and disobedient, the heads of the disturbers shall be devoured by the sword of justice, and you will feel the weight of his Majesty's displeasure, which is the type of the wrath of God; nor will any submissions or acknowledgments of your neglect hereafter avail you, as your Company have of old been supported by the royal favours. I have therefore wrote to you, you will act as you may think advisable; speedily send me your answer."

It behoved Shuja as Vizier of the Moghul Empire to write to the English merchants in

the tone which he adopted in the above letter. No one can deny that right as well as law was on the side of the Emperor. The English were trying to usurp his authority and power, and so it was necessary to tell them in the plainest language that they should desist from the path they were pursuing.

The English were frightened out of their wits when the Emperor and the Vizier with Meer Cassim invaded Behar. And they had very good reasons for being so. According to the *Seir* :—

"The English, meanwhile, being much diminished in number, and much fatigued by so severe a campaign in the very height of the rainy season, had commenced flagging. Intimidated by Shuja-ud-dowla's character for prowess, and impressed with an opinion of the bravery and number of his troops, they did not think themselves a match for them in the field. With this notion they repassed the Sohon, and resolved to retire within the walls of Azim-abad. The camp at Buxar was therefore raised, and they retreated with precipitation."*

The same author has also stated the cause of the failure of the Moslem troops. It was the misbehavior of those troops.

"Shuja-ud-dowla, with the Emperor and Meer Cassim in his company, marched on proudly and triumphantly;

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 528.

and having advanced by continual marches, he entered the province of Azimabad, where his troops, burning and plundering to the distance of five or six cosses in every direction, did not leave a trace of population throughout all that tract of ground. The poor inhabitants, whose hearts had been expanded on hearing of the arrival of an Emperor and a Vizier, no sooner found themselves exposed to every kind of insult and oppression, than they returned their heartiest thanks to the English, and prayed to God for their prosperity and return ;....."*

Major Adams, the officer in command of the Company's troops, having died in December 1763, a few days after the defeat and expulsion of Meer Cossim from Behar, the command of those troops devolved on Major Carnac. That officer was notoriously hostile to Meer Cossim. It is quite conceivable that he must have strained every nerve to bring about his ruin. He must have tried to create dissensions amongst the Moslem chiefs and nobles attached to or in command of troops. The English also intrigued with them. The author of the *Seir* was perhaps the medium through whom the English were carrying on their intrigues. He writes :—

"I resolved to attach myself to the English, for whom I had this long while conceived an affection. I had even some connections with them ; especially with Doctor Fullarton,

* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 528.

.....Some correspondence had also subsisted between him and me; and it was by that means he had informed me that the Emperor inclined to the English party in his heart. He had likewise advised me early to provide for myself and for that Prince's reaching the English camp. This intelligence I imparted to my father, and I exhorted him to take the lead in an affair that would establish our family, and entitle him to the gratitude of that nation. I added, that it was evident that so long as the Vezir continuee to command such unruly troops, and to be at variance with his confederates, as well as to turn a deaf ear to every sober advice, he would not be likely to prevail against the English; that matters standing in such a predicament, it would be advantageous to join a nation that seemed to entertain a veneration for the Imperial person, and an inclination for its interests, both which they expressed everywhere in their correspondence with me, in such a manner, as rendered it proper and expedient for that Prince to write to the ruler of that nation, such a letter as they seemed to wish for."*

The English having intrigued with the Emperor and presumably other leaders of the Moslem army, it is not difficult to imagine the real cause of Shuja's failure.†

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* *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 536.

† The defeat of Mir Qasim and the Vazir's and the Emperor's army was, to a certain extent, caused by the treachery of Maharaja Kalyan Singh, son of Raja Shitab Rai. He was in the employ of the Vezir but gave information regarding the number and movement of troops, military

The rest of the story of the war is very easily told. When the Vizier saw that the good fortune of his refugee, Meer Cossim, was on the wane, he forgot the promise which he had made him. The author of the *Seir* relates the manner in which the Nawab Vizier of Oudh ordered the arrest of Meer Cassim.* That writer rightly calls the Court of the Oudh prince "faithless". There was an opportunity for Meer Cossim to do away with Shujah-ud-dowlah. But he did not take advantage of it. Writes the English translator of the *Seir*,

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resources and other matters of his employer to the officers of the East India Company. He is not ashamed to write :—

"From this place (Phulwari) hostilities commenced and skirmishes were fought between the outposts of the opposing armies.....Rai Sadho Ram, the clerk of Maharajah Shitab Rai, who was in Azimabad at the time, came to see me at Phulwari.....I asked him further to give assurance to the English officials and Meer Muhammad Jafer Khan that I was with them and was on the lookout to find an opportunity to turn the tide in their favour. Rai Sadho Ram conveyed the message and returned to me informing me that both the English and the Nawab were pleased to get the message of sympathy and hope that they fully relied on me and accepted my assurance"

(J. B & O. R. S., VI, pp. 148-149).

* Vol. II, p. 538.

M. Raymond, the French convert to Islâm, that Mir Cassim had Shujah-ud-dowla in his power, when it would have been very easy to have struck a mighty blow.

"Mir-Cassim being then encamped about Banarès, Shudjah-ed-doulah, who had fatigued himself with hunting, plunged into the Ganges to bathe, and in the same breath, took into his head to pay him a visit. With a dozen of attendants, he got into a boat and crossed over. This was a critical moment; it was remarked by many of Mir-Cassem's servants, who pointed to the opportunity of making away with that Prince instantly, after which his army, destitute of a leader, would soon be brought over. I am not a *mozi, a perfide, an injurer*, answered Mir-Cassem, *let him come alone, if he will; he will be no less safe from all double dealings*." *

So the conduct of the Oude Prince towards Meer Cossim was mean, base and cowardly. It was easy for the English to corrupt the Moslem army, for there were dissensions in the camp of the latter,† of which they took immediate advantage

* *Ibid.* p .549, footnote 291.

† Thus one Zein-ul-Abudeen wrote a letter to Major Munro, received in Calcutta, 22nd September 1764, in which he wrote :—

"I have had the nonour to receive by the means of Ussud Khan Bahadur your friendly letter expressing your desire that I should join you with as many able-bodied and well-mounted horsemen, Moguls, Tooranies, &c., as I can.

by the manner in which they got possession of the Fort of Rotas. The author of the *Seir*, Syed Gholam Hussain Khan, to ingratiate himself with the English, proved a traitor to his country and managed to give the English the possession of that important fort. That Moslem is not ashamed to write that :—

"Major Munro, a king's servant, who had been appointed by the Council of Calcutta to the Command-in-Chief of the English forces, was just landed at Azim-abad, from whence he had wrote me by the channel of Doctor Fullarton,

'That if I could contrive to put the fortress of Rohotas in the hands of the English, I would entitle myself to their friendship and gratitude.'

"Sir, although it is very dishonorable to all men, particularly to persons of family, to desert the services they are engaged in, and go over to their Master's enemies, yet there are several circumstances which justify such a conduct in us. For instance, Shuja-ul-dowla, notwithstanding his oath upon the Koran, murdered the Nabob Mahomed Cooly Khan.

"Secondly, his behavior to the Nabob Cossim Aly Khan, who was a Syed and a descendant of the Prophet, has been very shameful.....

"The assisting and supporting of such an oppressor is neither conformable to reason, nor to the Koran, nor to the rules of any religion, and the quitting his service can reflect no dishonour upon any one, either in the sight of God or man....." (Long's Selections, pp. 358-359).

"Upon this intimation I applied to Raja Sabonful, a man who had the greatest obligations to our family,.....and I informed him, 'that it was not in the nature of things that the English should not prevail, shortly, and shortly should not overthrow and ruin the Vezir, and his confederates; that it was incumbent upon him therefore to examine the respective circumstances of both parties, and to take his resolution betimes; ....."

The Governor of the Fort fell into the snares of the wily Moslem traitor. He agreed to deliver it into the hands of the English under certain conditions. All those conditions were approved of by the English and so the fort was delivered to them. But with characteristic faithlessness they did not fulfil those conditions. The injured Governor of Rotas wrote to Ghulam Hussain complaining of the conduct of the English

"that not one of the stipulated conditions had been observed with him."*

Shuja-ud-dowla had to raise the siege of Azimabad (Patna) and returned to Buxar, where he intended to spend the rainy season. Mir Jaffer also returned to Calcutta to settle certain matters with the English. It has been already said that on his restoration Meer Jaffer had insisted on Nandkumar being made his minister. The English had very reluctantly acceded to his request.

* *Ibid*, pp. 553-554.

And now the English attributed all the blame of their failure to the intrigues and machinations of Nandkumar. There was scarcity of grain and money in the Nawab's camp and this was attributed to Nandkumar's intrigues. At a consultation held on 3rd April 1764, it was recorded by Vansittart and others :—

"And as we have had too frequent experience of this man's intriguing disposition, and are certain that he has many connections in Shuja Dowla's Court, we have reason to suspect that he will employ these connections, at so critical a juncture as this, against our government, as a security for himself in all circumstances :—That we cannot be too much on our guard against any such designs, and we should wish therefore to have him entirely removed from the Nabob's service."

The English of Calcutta bore malice against Nandkumar, because he saw through their nefarious designs and tried his best to safeguard the interests of his master against them. It is recorded by the author of the *Seir*, that on his retirement from the governorship,

"to guard his successors as much as possible against this man's (Nandkumar's) dangerous character, and endless intrigues, he (Mr. Vansittart) wrote a memoir upon him, got it bound in the form of a book, and kept it for use." *

* Vol. II, p. 557.

It is only necessary to mention that Major Carnac, who was with Meer Jaffer in the field, did not consider the Nawab to be influenced by Nandkumar but one *Roy Dulab*.* So the suspicion against Nandkumar seems to have been ill-founded.†

The Nawab was naturally anxious to negotiate with the Emperor and Shuja-ud-dowla. This conduct of the Nawab was even defended by Major Carnac, who in his letter, dated 5th June 1764, wrote to the Calcutta Committee that it was "very natural the Nabob should be very desirous of holding the Nezamut by virtue of the Royal Phirmaund, the religion as well as education of all *Musselmen* teaching them to regard this as the only regular constituted Authority;"‡

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* Third Report, p. 378.

† Major Carnac in his letter of the 16th May 1764 to Calcutta which was read at the Consultation of 24th May wrote :—

"That *Nand Coomar's* late behaviour has been such as to remove almost entirely the suspicion of his being engaged in treachery, however faulty he may have been in other particulars ; that ever since the appearance of the enemy he has, by his master's and his own earnest request, kept close to him (the Major), which is a strict argument that he was not concerned in any treasonable practices, as he was under his eye, and could not of consequence himself reap any advantage therefrom."

[Third Report, p. 373.]

‡ *Ibid*, p. 378.

But this gave great offence to the Calcutta English, who had made Meer Jaffer a puppet in their hands to serve their selfish designs. Meer Jaffer was to be fleeced and bled and therefore they demanded that he should immediately return to Calcutta from the front. This order Meer Jaffer had to obey.

The Calcutta English were not also satisfied with the conduct of Major Carnac. So they were desirous of superseding him by another military officer. For this purpose they brought Major Munro from Bombay. He arrived in Calcutta towards the end of June 1764 and was at once ordered to proceed to Patna to take the command of the troops, where he arrived some time in the month of July. He signalised his arrival at Patna by blowing from the mouth of guns sepoys alleged to have mutinied. No inquiry was made as to their grievances, and no attempt to remove them. Sepoys are no doubt mercenaries and because they lacked the feeling of patriotism it is therefore that they served the English and helped them in placing the yoke of the alien rule on the necks of their own countrymen. They are meek and submissive and unless they are ill-treated and have some real and tangible grievances, it is not in their nature to mutiny.

When the white soldiers in India mutiny or attempt to mutiny, they are not blown from guns, but their grievances are patiently inquired into and as far as possible removed. But not so in the case of Indian Sepoys.

Major Munro had instructions to proceed against Shuja-ud-dowla, prosecute the war with vigour and bring it to an early termination. It was feared that had there been delay in terminating the war, Shuja would have received help from the Marathas and Afghans. So the battle of Buxar was fought on September 15, 1764. Shuja was defeated with great loss. According to the translator of the *Seir* :—

"Five or six thousand men perished or were slain in the action, but ten thousand or more stuck in the mire, or perished in the retreat ; and two years after, the town of Buxar, the fields, and the muddy shores of the river, for mile's together, were beset with bones."*

The day before the battle, Meer Cassim was set at liberty by Shuja. He left the encamping ground on an elephant and was thus saved. For had he fallen into the hands of the English, the tortures that he would have been subjected to can be very easily conjectured.

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* Vol. II, p. 569 (footnote)

The English were perhaps all the time intriguing with the Emperor. Writes the *Seir* :—

"But that Prince (Shah Alam), who in his heart was dissatisfied with the Vizir, and had resolved to part with Behi Bahadur, thought proper to temporise under a variety of pretences, having some time before conceived the design of joining the English. For that nation had already made overtures on that subject, and rendered him desirous of joining them, as well as intent on availing himself of their assistance; and on the other hand, they expected that the Vezir, informed of their being forbidden by the Company to make any new conquests in India, would of himself come to terms of peace and friendship with them." *

So after the battle the Emperor separated from Shuja and encamped near the British lines. To quote the *Seir* again :—

"As soon as the Minister (Beni Bahadur) was seen on the other side of that river, the Emperor, who was thereby left at liberty, sent for the English ; who, finding so fair a pretence for advancing their own affairs, doubled their pace, and joined him in a few hours. They paid their respects to him, crossed the Ganga with him, and from thence invited Beni Bahadur to a conference."

The English tried to conclude peace with Shuja ; the Nawab Vizier was required to deliver into their hands Meer Cassem and Somro as terms of the peace. According to the author of the *Seir*,

* Vol. II, p. 571.

Beni Bahadur's answer to the proposal was as follows:—

"That Somro being master of a good body of troops, and such as had not broke their ranks in the last defeat, but had retreated in good order, the seizing that man's person would not be free from danger. But that Mir Cassem might be arrested; and if the Vezir should approve of it, his own endeavours would not be wanting in that business."

The author of the *Seir* informed Meer Cassem the terms on which the English agreed to make peace with Shuja. The quondam Nawab of Bengal had in order to save himself from the revenge of the Company's servants to run away as fast as he could from the vicinity of the encampment of the English. According to the *Seir*,

"he fled to Ilah-abad, with a swiftness and a rapidity that could be compared to nothing but to the wind or to the lightning; and having there managed in such a manner as to get possession of his family and women, which had been plundered by the Vezir's people, and confined in that castle, he marched on without stopping as far as Bareily,.....and there only he commenced to take some rest."

Meer Cassim now disappears from the pages of history, although he lived till 1777, when he died at Delhi.*

* In the Introduction to the Third Volume of *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* (pp. xiii *et seq*), Maulvi Badrudin

Somro also, knowing the fate that might any day befall him, left the service of the Oudh prince and made haste to join with his battallion the Jats of Agra.

As the terms on which the English consented to make peace with Shuja were not complied with, they pushed on and tried to carry the war into the country of the Oudh prince.

The English besieged the strong fortress of Chunar. According to the *Seir*, the British Commander

"produced an Imperial order, in hopes that the garrison would submit on the intimation of the Imperial threats. However, as soon as he saw that these did not make any

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Ahmad writes that the fugitive Nawab Mir Qasim in 1766 invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to come and help him.

"On 2nd February 1767 the Governor received a letter from Muhammad Riza Khan, informing him that Ahmad Shah had crossed the Attock and was 120 miles from Lahore.....At this time Raghunath Rao, uncle to the young Peshwa Madhu Rao, was in Hindustan ravaging the country of the Jats.....

"While the Mahrattas were following their traditional occupation of plunder and rapine, Ahmed Shah entered India with a large army.....It is hardly possible to doubt that the rumour was true which said that Mir Qasim had invited him to India, and that the Shah's object was not merely to punish the refractory Sikhs but to restore

effect, he brought his cannon forward, battered the walls, and pushed the siege with vigour. The governor of the place, Mahamed beshir qhan, a principal Lord of the Vezir's Court, was in his heart ill affected and wavering. Nevertheless the garrison, which had resolved to stand a siege, stretched out the feet of firmness, and attached themselves to the defence of the place. But as their governor seemed dissatisfied, they contrived to get him out of the walls in the manner he wished, and to have him conducted to the road that led to Shuja-ud-dowla's camp; after this, they made a brave defence; but yet there remained but a few days respite to the fortress. For part of the wall having been ruined and beaten down by the violence of the cannon, the English in a dark night, prepared a number of proper troops and gave an assault to the place. They climbed the rock, and were encouraging each other to descend into the fort

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Mir Qasim to the throne of Murshidabad.....In 1761 the conqueror had justified his invasion by his triumph over the Mahrattas. What should be his object this time? Most likely the expulsion of the English and the restoration of an 'oppressed, fugitive and homeless' Nawab. But a great change had taken place in the political situation in India. In 1759 all the Muhammadan chiefs of Hindusthan were on his side; now the most powerful of them all. Nawab Shuja h'u'd-Daulah, stood aloof and was actually leagued with the very power whom he might have engaged in battle. The Shah was not prepared to meet a confederacy of the English, the Vizir and the Sikhs. He therefore gave a curt reply to Mir Qasim, and returned to his country."

by the ruins and the scattered loose stones of the breach; when they were overheard by some of the garrison, who being put upon their guard, waked their companions so expeditiously, that the garrison was up in a moment, and ready at the breach; from whence they made such continual discharges of musketry, as disabled most of the assaulters."

The English were miserably repulsed. Of course they never in any fair fight could beat the Indians. They had always to resort to bribery, deceipt and other means, which are said to be justified in love and war. The English did not try to gain the fortress of Chunar; so they raised the siege and marched on to Allahabad, as they had received intelligence of Shuja advancing against them.

Fortunately for them Najaf Khan, whose daring deeds at Oodow-Nullah have already been narrated before, joined the English at this juncture, and so with his assistance, they succeeded in capturing the fort of Allahabad. Writes the *Seir* :—

"Nedjef-qhan, who knew the strong and weak parts of the fortress, as having long resided in it, pointed to a part where the wall had no rampart behind; and this being soon brought down by the battering cannon, which had been seized in plundering the Vezir's camp, Aalybeg-qhan, the governor, soon found that he had but little time left; and he offered to surrender on Shytab-ray's promising that the honor and properties of the garrison should remain un-

touched, excepting only whatever should prove to belong to the Vezir himself. And he assured the besieged, that they would come to no harm, whether they attached themselves to the English, or not. These conditions having been agreed to, he brought them out of the citadel; and the place was immediately taken possession of by the English. Aaly-beg-qhan, with his garrison, and other servants of Shuja, received safe conduct, with which he repaired to his master."*

Shuja also like Meer Cossim fled to Bareilly, where he was hospitably received by the Rohilla ruler. But he did not give up all ideas of fighting the English. The famous Maratha General Mulhar Rao Holkar, with the disciplined troops under him, joined Shuja at Cora in the latter's attack on the English. The Oudh prince was expecting help from the Rohillas, but the latter did not join him. There were a few skirmishes, in which Shuja was worsted, and so the whole of his dominions had to submit to the English. He was advised to repair to the English camp, which he did without any safe conduct, but he was received there in a respectful manner by General Carnac, who had again assumed the command of the troops, as Major Munro had left Bengal for his native land. Through the mediation of

* Vol. II, p. 579.

Shitab Ray, Shuja concluded a peace with the English on the following terms,—

"That to discharge the expenses of the war, Shuja-ud-doulah would pay fifty lakhs of rupees to the English in the following manner: Twenty-five lacs constant, and twenty-five lacs by assignments upon the future revenues of his country; under condition, however, that any contributions which the English might have already raised in them, should be deemed parts of the assigned sums. That the province of Ilah-abad should be set apart for the sole use of the Emperor; and that the city and fortress of that name should be assigned for his residence..... That a body of English troops should remain at Ilah-abad to guard the Emperor's person; and that an Englishman on the part of the English nation, should reside at Shuja-ud-dowla's court, in the quality of Vekil or Agent, and Mian-dji or go-between, but without power to meddle with that Prince's affairs. That after the conclusion of this treaty, the friends and enemies of one party should be deemed the friends and enemies of the other; ....."*

Thus ended the war of Shuja with the English. They mulcted Shuja not only of a large amount of money but also of his territory. The fair province of Ghazipur was wrested from him —a measure which was not approved of by the Directors of the East India Company, who in their letter to Bengal, dated 24th December, 1765, wrote :—

* Seir-ul-mutakherin, Vol. II, p. 584.

"The war having been begun against Cossim Ally Khan, we approve the measures you took in conducting it, till the battle of Buxar. But the demand of the *Gauzepoor* country, the undertaking to conquer *Souza Dowla's* country for the King, and the treaty you have made with him, we shall give our opinion of separately.....to demand the *Gauzepoor* country, a frontier surrounded with warlike People, we conceive was a Measure by no Means adequate to the end proposed, and absolutely a contradiction to our repeated Directions not to extend our Possessions."*

THE LAST DAYS OF MEER JAFFER.

A traitor can never be a happy creature, for he can never command respect even from those for whose sake he commits treachery.

Such was the case with Meer Jaffer. His life was altogether miserable and made more so by his Christian friends under whose spell he had betrayed his co-religionist Siraj-ud-dowla. He was used as a ladder by the English and as soon as they succeeded to attain to the height of their ambition or rather selfish end, they kicked him off without mercy or any scruple. He was made to serve their vile interests and they made his last days very miserable. The appendix to the third report on the Nature, State and Condition of the

* Third Report, p. 382.

East India Company contains minutes of the consultations of the Calcutta merchants and shows how they were bent upon ill-treating Meer Jaffer. In the report of the Parliamentary Committee it was stated :

"Your Committee then examined, to the same point, Archibald Swinton, Esquire, who was Captain in the Army, in Bengal, in 1765, and also Persian Interpreter and Aid de Camp to general Carnac : And he informed your Committee, that he had frequent conversations with Meer Jaffer about the five lacks of rupees per month, stipulated to be paid by Meer Jaffer in October 1764, as mentioned in Mr. Leycester's evidence, and the other demands made on him by the Board; of which he frequently heard Meer Jaffer complain bitterly; and of all the demands made upon him at that time, which had not been stipulated in his treaty with the Company, on his restoration, particularly the increased demand for restitution for losses, and the donation to the Navy."*

The indecent manner in which the English forced their demands on him hastened his death. This even Sir William W. Hunter, steeped in the traditions of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy, is compelled to admit. In his account of Murshidabad he writes :

"His death took place in January 1765, and is said to have been hastened by the unseemly importunity with

* Third report, p. 306.

which the English at Calcutta pressed upon him their private claims to restitution." (Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. ix, p. 191).

The Moslem traitor in his last hours did not receive any solace and comfort from his own co religionists, or from any Christians, whom some Muhammadans from interested motives are in the habit of calling "People of the Book," but from a Hindoo, that is a "heathen." That heathen was the well-known Nundkumar. The author of the *Seir*, a bigoted Moslem and no friend of Meer Jaffer, says that that Moslem died a "Gentoo." For Nundkumar brought the holy water from a Hindoo temple and poured it down Meer Jaffer's throat and also washed his body with it.

CHAPTER V.

Events Succeeding Meer Jaffer's Death.

Meer Jaffer died in the beginning of February 1765 at Murshidabad. But before his death Mr. Vansittart had resigned the Governorship of Bengal and sailed for his native country, delivering the management of Indian affairs into the hands of one Mr. Spencer, a Bombay Civilian. The affairs of the Company in Bengal were not in a flourishing condition. To put their affairs on a sound footing the Directors asked Lord Clive to go out to India.* Vansittart did not like the idea of being superseded by Clive and so he resigned before his arrival.

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* The author of the *Seir* writes that

"When the intelligence arrived in England of the revolution effected in favor of Mir-Cassem-qhan, and of the troubles that had been the consequences of it, the people of that country conceived such fears for the Company's safety, and fancied their affairs to be so teeming with mighty difficulties, that they thought no one equal to the task of re-establishing the Company's affairs, and quieting the country, but Lord Clive himself." (Vol. III, p. 5, Calcutta Reprint).

It was during the Governorship of Mr. Spencer that Meer Jaffer died. The treaty which was imposed on that Moslem traitor by the English did not make any mention about his successor after his death. So the English were not going to lose the opportunity without improving their position in the country.

The second son of Meer Jaffer, known as Najum-u-Doula, succeeded to the Musnad of Bengal but he was not recognised by the English Government of Calcutta as Nawab until they had forced a new treaty on him, in which such terms were introduced as changed the relation between the two Governments. The Nawab was required to appoint a naib or deputy for the management of all affairs under him and they insisted that Mohammed Reza Khan, who was known to be favorably disposed towards the English, should be appointed to this situation.

Another clause of the new treaty made it obligatory on the Nawab to make the election and removal of all the principal officers in the revenue department subject to the approval of the Government of Calcutta. The payment of five lacs for the maintenance of the Company's army was to be continued, and the Nawab bound himself not to keep any troops himself, except for purposes of

state and for the collection of the revenue. The English were also exempted from duties in all parts of the country.

These terms were of course not palatable to the Nawab ; but his objections were of no avail. He had to yield and had to pay the penalty for the treachery of his father. He had to sign the treaty and with it also pay presents of 20 lacs to the members of the Calcutta Government.

The new Nawab insisted on keeping Nundkumar as his Dewan, but the English did not allow him to do so. To make it an object lesson to the Nawab that he was a non-entity, that he had no hand in the management of his own affairs, the English removed Nundkumar from his office at Murshidabad and brought him a prisoner to Calcutta.

It was after the recognition of the new Nawab by the English that Lord Clive landed at Calcutta in May 1765. He had heard of the death of Meer Jaffer at Madras, where he had touched on the voyage up to Calcutta. Says Mr. Wheeler that Lord Clive

" was delighted at the news. He was anxious to introduce the new system for the government of the Bengal provinces, which he had unfolded to Pitt more than seven years before. He would set up a new Nawab who should be only a cypher.

He would leave the administration in the hands of native officials. The English were to be the real masters; they were to take over the revenues, defend the three provinces from invasion and insurrection, make war and conclude peace. But the sovereignty of the English was to be hidden from the public eye. They were to rule only in the name of the Nawab and under the authority of the Moghul Emperor.

"Lord Clive had no misgivings as to his new scheme. He knew that there were two claimants to the Nawab's throne, an illegitimate son of Meer Jaffer aged twenty, and a legitimate grandson aged six. He would place the child of six on the throne at Murshedabad. He would carry out all his arrangements during the minority, without the possibility of any difficulty or opposition."

So Clive was enraged when he found himself forestalled and he—the moral leper—showed great indignation when he learnt that his compatriots had extorted twenty lacs of rupees from the new Nawab as the price for setting him on the throne of Murshidabad. He seated himself on a moral chair and condemned the conduct of his Christian countrymen. To a friend, Clive wrote :—

"Alas! how is the English name sunk! I could not avoid paying the tribute of a few tears to the departed and lost fame of the British nation (irrecoverably so, I fear). However, I do declare, by that great Being who is the

* Early Records of ritish India, pp. 329—330.

searcher of all hearts, and to whom we must be accountable, if there must be an hereafter, that I am come out with a mind superior to all corruption, and that I am determined to destroy those great and growing evils, or perish in the attempt."

But when he taxed his Anglo-Indian countrymen for their corruption, they said that they had imitated his conduct and therefore they should not be blamed for what they had done. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery. And so Lord Clive should have congratulated himself on having so many apt pupils of his ready to emulate his conduct. But he evidently thought that they had no business to imitate him. "Don't you do as your parson does", is a sentence of a well-known English song. He justified his conduct by affirming that the overthrow of Siraj-ud-dowla, and the elevation of Meer Jaffer, had been the work of the people of Bengal themselves, the English taking part in it as mercenary allies and subordinates. But according to him the case was different with regard to the transactions which accompanied the establishment of Nazam-ud-dowla on his Musnad.

The order of the Court prohibiting their servants taking any presents from the non-Christian nobles and other persons of India was

received on the 24th January 1765. Meer Jaffer's death took place about a fortnight afterwards. "So all the English servants of the Company were fully acquainted with the views and sentiments of their masters. Yet they could not resist the temptation of enriching themselves at the expense of their non-Christian allies and openly defying the orders of their masters. Clive by taking them to task for their misbehavior made them his enemies. He did not succeed in making them disgorge their ill-gotten wealth. They resigned the service, and some of them returning to England set on foot such an agitation against Clive that they succeeded in getting him impeached.

Clive had been sent out to reform the abuses of which the servants of the Company were guilty in carrying on their private trade. The Directors took a statesmanlike view of the situation when in their letter of the 26th of April 1765, referring to the old Imperial firman, they wrote :—

"Treaties of commerce are understood to be for the mutual benefit of the contracting parties. Is it then possible to suppose that the Court of Delhi, by conferring the privilege of trading free of customs, could mean an untaxed trade in the commodities of their own country at that period unpractised and unthought of by the English, to the detriment of their revenues and the ruin of their own merchants? We do not find such a construction was ever heard of till

our own servants first invented it, and afterwards supported it by violence. Neither could it be claimed by the subsequent treaties with Meer Jaffier, or Cossim Ali, which were never understood to give one additional privilege of trade beyond what the firman expressed. In short, the specious arguments used by those who pretended to set up a right to it convince us they did not want judgment, but virtue to withstand the temptation of suddenly amassing a great fortune, although acquired by means incompatible with the peace of the country, and their duty to the Company.

"Equally blameable were they who, acknowledging they had no right to it, and sensible of the ill consequences resulting from assuming it, have, nevertheless, carried on this trade, and used the authority of the Company to obtain by a treaty exacted by violence, a sanction for a trade to enrich themselves, without the least regard or advantage to the Company, whose forces they employed to protect them in it.

"Had this short question been put, which their duty ought first to have suggested, 'Is it for the interest of our employers?' they would not have hesitated one moment about it; but this criterion seems never once to have occurred."

Clive had used the expression of clearing the "Augean stable;" for he found corruption prevailing everywhere in the administration of the country. In his letter dated 30th September 1765 he wrote to the Directors of the East India Company:—

"Upon my arrival, I am sorry to say, I found your

affairs in a condition so nearly desperate, as would have alarmed any set of men, whose sense of honour, and duty to their employers, had not been estranged by the too eager pursuit of their own immediate advantage. The sudden, and, among many, the unwarrantable acquisition of riches, had introduced luxury in every shape, and in its most pernicious excess.....Examples of this sort, set by superiors, could not fail of being followed, in a proportionate degree, by inferiors ; the evil was contagious, and spread among the Civil and Military, down to the writer, the ensign, and the free merchant.....

"Before I had discovered these various sources of wealth, I was under great astonishment to find individuals so suddenly enriched, that there was scarce a gentleman in the settlement who had not fixed upon a very short period for his return to England with affluence.....At the time of my arrival, I saw nothing that bore the form or appearance of government.....

"Your orders for the execution of the Covenants were positive, and expressly mentioned to be the Resolution of a General Court of Proprietors. Your servants at Bengal, however, determined to reject them ; and had not the Select Committee resolved, that the example should be first set by the Council, or a suspension from your service take place, it is certain they would have remained unexecuted to this hour."

The army showed utter lack of discipline. For wrote Clive :

" Nor were these excesses confined to your Civil servants alone ; the Military Departments also had caught the infection, and riches, the bane of discipline, were daily promoting

the ruin of our army.....How much must the expectations of your army be raised, when they are suffered, without control, to take possession, for themselves, of the whole booty, donation money, and plunder, on the capture of a city? This, I can assure you, happened at Benares; and, what is more surprising, the then Governor and Council, so far from laying in a claim to the moiety which ought to have been reserved for the Company, agreeable to those positive orders from the Court of Directors a few years ago, ...gave up the whole to the captors.....

"Every state (and such now is your Government in India) must be near its period, when the rage of luxury and corruption has seized upon its leaders and inhabitants. .....Independency of fortune is always averse to those duties of subordination, which are inseparable from the life of a soldier; and in this country, if the acquisition be sudden, a relaxation of discipline is more immediately the consequence."

Regarding the refined brutality which the English practised on the Indians, Clive wrote:—

"The sources of tyranny and oppression, which have been opened by the European agents acting under the authority of the Company's servants, and the numberless black agents and sub-agents acting also under them, will, I fear, be a lasting reproach to the English name in this country. .....Ambition, success, and luxury, have, I find, introduced a new system of politics, at the severe expense of English honour, of the Company's faith, and even of common justice and humanity."

It was in reply to this letter of Clive that the Court of Directors wrote to him in May, 1766,

"that we think the vast fortunes acquired in the inland trade have been obtained by a scene of the most tyrannic and oppressive conduct that ever was known in any age or country.

"We have had too much occasion to remark the tyrannic and oppressive conduct of all European agents, who have got away from under the eye of the Presidency, and we wish your Lordship would make it an object of your consideration, how to confine the said Europeans as much as possible to the Presidency, and to those subordinates where the largeness of the investment may require it to be conducted by covenanted servants, preferably to Gomastahs."

Clive hit upon one plan to reform the affairs of the Company and that was to secure all power in the hands of the British authorities at Calcutta and to make use of the Nawab at Murshidabad as a mere puppet. This was known in the euphemistic language of the day as the "Dewany". As far back as 1758 Clive had communicated to Pitt his ideas about the government of Bengal, and now that he had the opportunity he tried to carry it out into effect. In this he was merely following the example set by Dupleix, the Peishwas, the Nizam and the Nawab Vizier of Oude. The Mogul Emperor of Hindustan was the real sovereign of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. The Nawab was his representative or Viceroy. In theory, he could not grant any

privilege to anybody without the sanction and approval of the Emperor. Clive understood this very well and so he proceeded to the Emperor for procuring for the Company the investiture of the Dewan.

The Emperor was still staying at Allahabad under the protection of the Nawab Vazir of Oude.* Clive had to go to that place, to have his ambition gratified. Before his return to India, the war that

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* The Necessity for Retaining the King at Allahabad.

The Governor Verelst wrote :—

"As the necessity of retaining His Majesty (Shah Alam) under our influence, or separating ourselves entirely from him, is a maxim in our system, and as the former seems most probable, we should be careful how we allow strangers to assume the management of his Councils. Our conduct towards him is plain. We must either contrive to guide him at a distance, or so to palliate, that if unsuccessful he may consider us as his protectors, our provinces as the place of his refuge."

According to Verelst there was superior advantage in the King removing to Bengal.

"All things, at present, seem tending to the latter and it is an event most to be wished ; but I had rather His Majesty should make the proposition, than that we should give the invitation."

Wheeler's Early Records, p. 380.

had been waged against Cossim Ali and the Nawab Vazir had been brought to a close. It is asserted by one of the biographers of Clive that the tidings of his arrival induced the Nawab Vazir to sue for peace.

"Clive's name," writes Revd. Mr. Gleig, "among the natives was that of a man irresistible in war. The title which he had received from the Nabob of the Carnatic, in commemoration of his exploits on that side of the peninsula, had followed him to Hindostan; and in Bengal, and indeed as far as the limits of the Mogul Empire extended, Sabat Jung's fame was everywhere spread abroad."

But Clive himself wanted peace and not war. For writing to General Carnac on the 20th of May, 1765, he said :—

"We must heartily set about a peace; for the expense has now become so enormous (no less than 10 lacs per mensem, civil and military), that the Company must inevitably be undone if the Mahrattas or any other power should invade Bahar and Bengal, for it will then be impossible to raise money sufficient to continue the war. This is a very serious consideration with me, and will, I make no doubt, strike you in the same light."

General Carnac was at that time in Benares. Clive set out to join him there. But as he had some important business to settle at Murshidabad, he took that city on his way. Mahomed Reza Khan, who had displaced Nund Kumar, was all in

all at Murshidabad. He was no statesman like his Hindu rival, and so he was easily won over by the scheming and designing Clive. Through his instrumentality the Christian lord succeeded in taking all the power into his own hands, leaving the Nawab only the shadow.

But Clive was not satisfied with what he had done in Murshidabad, by reducing the Nawab to a non-entity. He was ambitious of procuring more power for himself and the Company. He proceeded to Benares to join Carnac and also meet Sujah-u-dowlah, who was at that time staying there. He had the first meeting with the Nawab Vazir on the 2nd August. At this meeting, a treaty was imposed on the Vazir, by which he had to surrender Allahabad and Corah, and agreed to pay to the Company £600,000 as compensation for expenses incurred in the war.

After ratifying the treaty with the Nawab Vazir Clive pushed on to Allahabad, where, as said before, the Mogul Emperor Shah Alam was at that time staying. He met the Emperor for the first time on the 9th August 1765. That was the occasion when Shah Alam tolled the death-knell of the Mogul Empire by signing the grant of the Dewany of Bengal, Behar and Orissa to the East India

Company.* He could not see through the designs of the forger Clive, or it may be that the grant of the Dewany was wrested from him. The latter impression must have been prevalent at that time, for otherwise there was no occasion for the Parliamentary Committee of 1773 to make an enquiry about it. In the Third Report (p. 324) it is stated that Lord Clive was questioned,

"Whether, in his opinion, the grant of the Dewanee was really a grant from a prince, who from his situation at that time might be supposed capable of bestowing such concessions; or whether it was an instrument executed as a piece of form, which his Lordship thought it expedient to take from political motives."

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* It has been often asked why did not the Company assume the executive Government of Bengal after the battle of Plassey?

In his *"View of the English Government in Bengal,"* p. 62, Mr. Verelst says that it was impossible at that time for the Company to have taken the management of the Dewanee into its own hands, for that the number of the civil servants was barely adequate to the due performance of the commercial business; they were quite ignorant of the genius of the people, and totally unfit for the work of administration.

In 1765 Mr. Holwell, who had been Governor of Calcutta when Siraj attacked that City, published his well-known "Tracts," in which he wrote to throw off the Soubadarry mask. He said:—

The answer given by Clive was an evasive one. He "referred to the public records of the Company wherein his sentiments on that subject are entered."

There can be little doubt that the grant of the Dewany was extorted from the Emperor. Even Elphinstone, in his history of the rise of British power in India, is constrained to admit that

"There are few transactions in our Indian history more difficult to explain than this treaty. On the one hand the practical good sense of Clive, not apt to be influenced by theories, or alarmed by imaginary dangers, makes us hesitate to suppose that so great a sacrifice could be made without an adequate motive, while on the other, the state of opinion in India at the time, the course of previous events, and the result of subsequent experience, leaves us without any ground for conjecturing what that motive may have been."

From Elphinstone's explanation it is not difficult to conjecture that the grant was obtained by

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"Let us boldly dare to be soubahs ourselves." "We have nibbled at these provinces for eight years, and notwithstanding an immense acquisition—an immense acquision of territory and revenue—what benefit has resulted from our successes, to the Company? Shall we then go on nibbling and nibbling at the bait, until the trap falls and crushes us?"

Clive had to act on the public opinion which was growing on this subject amongst his countrymen.

playing on the fears of the Emperor, that is by fraud and show of force.*

That the grant of the Dewany at that juncture was very useful to the affairs of the Company is admitted by Clive, who in his letter to the Court of Directors dated Calcutta, 30th September 1765, wrote :—

"The assistance which the great Mogul had received from our arms and treasury, made him readily bestow this

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* Of course it is the interest of Clive and the English writers of Indian history to say that the Dewany was granted to the Company by the Moghul Emperor of his own free will and without any hesitation. But such was not the case ; for the author of the *Seir*, who had a correct knowledge of the nature of the transaction, distinctly says that the Emperor and the Vazir

"were obliged to grant the request (that is the Dewany), although *reluctantly*." (Vol. III, p. 9, Calcutta reprint)

The word *reluctantly* shows that the grant was extorted from the Emperor by fraud and show of force. The author of the *Seir* then proceeds :

"Thus a business of such a magnitude, as left neither pretence nor subterfuge, and which at any other time would have required the sending wise ambassadors and able negotiators, as well as a deal of parley and conference with the Company and the King of England, and much negotiation and contention with the Ministers, was done and finished in less time than would have been taken up for the sale of a jack-ass, or of a beast of burden, or of a head of cattle."

grant upon the Company and it is done in the most effectual manner you can desire. The allowance for the support of the Nabob's dignity and power, and the tribute to his Majesty, must [illegible] ; the remainder belongs to the [illegible] are now no longer to be apprehended [illegible] ecting them will, in future, be wanting [illegible] ulmen ; nor will your servants, Civil or M[illegible] to foment disturbances, from whence can a[illegible] themselves. Restitution, donation mon[illegible] xc., &c., [illegible] e perfectly abolished, as the revenues from [illegible] hence they [illegible] ed to issue will be possessed by our-s[illegible] *

[illegible] live in this letter mentioned his reasons for [illegible] undertaking the Civil administration of the dis[illegible] vinces. He wrote :—

[illegible] The power of supervising the provinces, though lodged [illegible] s, should not, however, in my opinion, be exerted. Three [illegible] es the present number of Civil servants would be insuffi[illegible] nt for that purpose : whereas, if we leave the manage[illegible] ent to the old officers of the Government, the Company [illegible] ed not be at the expense of one additional servant ; and [illegible] ough we may suffer in the collection, yet we shall always [illegible] e able to detect and punish any great offenders, and shall [illegible] ave some satisfaction in knowing that the corruption is not among ourselves. By this means also the abuses inevitably springing from the exercise of territorial authority, will be effectually obviated ; there will still be a Nabob, with an allowance suitable to his dignity, and the territorial juris-

* Third Report, 1773, p. 394.

diction will still be in the chiefs of the country, acting under him and the Presidency in conjunction, though the revenues will belong to the Company. Besides, were the Company's officers to be the collectors, would immediately take umbrage; and to the British Court might be attended with sing consequences. Nor can it be either the French, Dutch or Danes, will a glish Company Nabob of Bengal, and pay their servants the duties upon trade, or the rents of those districts, which they have for many years possessed by virtue of the Royal Phirmaund, or by grants from former Nabobs."

It was not from any consideration of moderation that the East India Company at that time did not undertake the Civil administration of the provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. Sir Edward Colebrooke, in his edition of Elphinstone's History of "Rise of British power in India," says that Clive's

"moderation on this important occasion has been a theme of reproach from some writers on Indian history who hold that it was only necessary for him to have stretched forth his hand and grasped the dominion of Hindostan. The pacific views which have prevailed at intervals between periods of war and conquest have, according to such politicians, only served as foils to the energy and successes of their warlike successors. The policy of Clive in maintaining a double Government in Bengal was in this view a sham, and doomed to be reversed in a very few

years, and his forbearance in not pressing on after the victories in Behar was weakness."*

Clive himself furnished reasons for his not pressing on after the victories in Behar—reasons which do not show that there was any weakness on his part. Writing to the Court of Directors on the 30th September 1765, he said :—

"Considering the excesses we have of late years manifested in our conduct, the princes of Indostan will not readily imagine us capable of moderation, nor can we expect they will ever be attached to us by any other motive than fear. Meer Jaffier, Cossim Ally, the Nawab of Arcot (the best Mussalman I ever knew) have afforded instances sufficient of their inclination to throw off the English superiority."

Moderation was then a necessity—this being dictated by policy. Moreover, the British servants of the Company being corrupt and addicted to luxury could not be trusted with the administration of the Company's affairs at a distance from the Presidency. Clive wrote in the letter from which extracts have already been given above :—

"The regulation of the Nabob's ministry, the acquisition of the Dewannee, and the honorable terms on which we have conducted a peace with the Vizier of the Empire

* P. 449.

have placed the dignity and advantages of the English East India Company on a basis, more firm than our most sanguine wishes could a [illegible] months ago have suggested. These however alone w[illegible]ure your stability; these are but the outwork[illegible] you from your natural enemies, the nat[illegible] All is not safe. Danger still subsists f[illegible]dable enemies within; luxury, corruption,[illegible]city, these have possession of your princip[illegible]n[illegible] are ready to betray your citadel."

With such agents as those whose conduct [illegible]live condemned in no measured terms it was impossible to bring large territories at that time under the jurisdiction of the Company. Moreover, had this been done it might have precipitated the English into war with other Christian nations. For in the course of the letter referred to above, Clive wrote :—

"I have already observed, that our acquisition will give no umbrage to foreign nations, with respect to our territorial jurisdiction, so long as the present appearance of the Nabob's power is preserved; but I am convinced they will, ere long, entertain jealousies of our commercial superiority. Public complaints have indeed been alreaty made from both French and Dutch factories, that the dread of the English name, added to the encouragement of your servants at the different aurungs, has deterred the weavers from complying with their usual and necessary demands; and I am persuaded, that sooner or later, national remonstrances will be made on that subject. Perhaps one-half

of the trade being reserved to the English Company, and the other divided between the French, Dutch and Danes, in such proportions as may be settled between their respective commissaries, might adjust these disputes to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. Besides, as every nation which trades to the East Indies constantly brings out silver, for the purchase of merchandize in return, and as our revenues will, for the future, enable us to furnish all our investments, without any remittance from England, it seems necessary that we should, in some degree, encourage the trade of others, in order that this country may be supplied by them with bullion, to replace the quantity we shall annually send to China, or to any other part of the world.".

This then was one of the principal motives of Clive in not pressing on after the victories of Behar. For this would have necessarily contracted the field of the trade operations of other Christian nations and either would have precipitated a war with them or prevented the influx of bullion of which the East India Company stood in urgent need, as mentioned by Clive in the letter referred to above.

After receiving the patent of the Dewany from the Emperor, Clive left Allahabad for Calcutta.

It is necessary here to refer to the death of the young Nawab of Murshidabad. His death war sudden and took place under very suspicious circumstances. The author of the *Seir* writes :—

"It must be mentioned that Lord Clive, after a short

stay at Moorshidabad, had landed in the garden of Saaduc-bagh on his way to Ilah-abad, where he had been complimented by Nedjm-ed-dowlah and Mahmed-reza-khan, who had accompanied him so far. On Lord Clive's departure these noble persons were returning to their palaces, when on a sudden, Nedjm-ed-dowlah was assaulted by some sharp pains in his bowels, which finding no vent at all, became so excruciating, that the young Nawab on his alighting at his palace, departed this life."*

In a footnote, the translator adds :—

"I was passing by the young Prince's gate at that very time.....The general report charges Mahmed-reza-khan strongly."

Mahmed-reza-khan was the friend of the English, and the death of the young Nawab being so sudden and under suspicious circumstances, it was not unreasonable to suspect the English in general, and Clive in particular, of foul play in causing the death of the Moslem ruler of Murshidabad. Indeed, so strong was the suspicion that the Parliamentary Committee of 1773 had to inquire into this matter. The rumor in Calcutta attributed the death to some foul play on the part of Clive.†

When we remember that Clive was no friend

* Vol. III, p. 13 (Calcutta Reprint).

† Third Report (1773), p. 325.

of the young Nawab, for in his letter to the Court of Directors, dated 30th September 1765, his lordship expressed his sentiments regarding that Muhammadan prince in the following terms :—

"Even our young Nabob, who is the issue of a prostitute, who has little abilities, and less education to supply the want of them; mean, weak, and ignorant, as this man is, he would, if left to himself, and a few of his artful flatterers, pursue the very paths of his predecessors. It is impossible, therefore, to trust him with power, and be safe."

It is not unreasonable to suspect his lordship of foul play in causing the death of Nedjm-ud-dowla. There was no villainy to which that lord could not stoop to gain his object. By the Nawab's death the East India Company benefited,

"in that they took the opportunity of reducing the allowance that was made for the Military Establishment of the former Nawab, by reducing it from 55 lacks a year to Rupees 41, 81, 131."*

The witnesses examined before the Parliamentary Committee on this subject were Mr. Sykes and General Carnac. Of course they denied any foul play. But it should be remembered that they were particular friends of Clive and were associated with him in administration. What

* Third Report (1773), p. 325.

wonder if they also had some hand in that foul deed? For,

"Mr. Verelst mentioned in a private letter, that there was such a rumour [of foul play] in Calcutta, and that it was levelled at *Lord Clive and the gentlemen in administration* by their enemies."*

So the evidence of Mr. Sykes and General Carnac is not that of disinterested witnesses, and they were not quite trustworthy.

With the death of this Nawab the semblance of power possessed by the Murshidabad Nawabs disappears from the annals of Bengal. From henceforth, the history of Bengal is interwoven with the names of Christian Governors of the English race.

* Third Report, p. 325.

CHAPTER VI.

The Last Days of Clive in India.

Clive came out ostensibly to reform the administration of the East India Company in Bengal and remove the abuses in its affairs there. He talked much, but did very little. Perhaps it was not his interest to have made any reforms in the administration, or he had no capacity to do so. The fact is that his character did not command respect from any body, and although he was invested with extraordinary powers, he had no influence in this country with his own fellow countrymen. They looked upon him as a moral leper,* a self-seeking man who would not scruple

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* Caraccioli writes in his Life of Clive, Vol I (page 447):—

"A most amiable woman, of a respectable character, now in England, attracted his attention and stimulated his desires. He knew the approaches were to be made with precaution and secrecy on account of the lady's spotless fame and her friend's credit and honourable way of living. One of the young servants of the Company, his lordship's faithful agent in love affairs, was charged with this amorous negotiation. The lady, who is sensible and witty, on the first inti-

mation of his lordship's respectful admiration for her endearing accomplishments, turned into ridicule the addresses of the noble Lord and suggestions of his plenipo.

"One morning she found, upon her toilet, the following letter in the Oriental style, supposed to have been placed there by some of her servants, gained by the skilful agent; it was an allegory of the noble lover's exploits and exaggerated passions, expressed in the following terms :—

'Zadi, nobly despising the blandishments of fortune in the commercial profession to which he had been designed, with an active genius and natural talents for war, entered spontaneously the illustrious career of heroes and of those benefactors of mankind who, having subdued sovereigns and nations, give peace and happiness to the vanquished. The fruit of his first achievements in the field was the conquest of a fertile province. He next wrested from the hands of a warlike and powerful enemy an important fortress which secured his new acquisitions; the strong bulwark of a petty tyrant, whose hostile fleets annoyed the commerce of Europe and Asia, yielded to the victorious troops led by Zadi, who soon revenged the barbarous death of his countrymen by re-taking the place which had been the horrid scene of a savage Prince's merciless perfidy. Having routed the formidable army of the cruel despot and dethroned him, he bestowed kingdoms, which he had no ambition to gain for himself, and thus became arbiter of the East, and the fame of Zadi's victory having reached from the Ganges to the Western boundaries of Europe, he returned to his native land, where, after he had the satisfaction of seeing his services publicly acknowledged by those whom he had made the sovereigns of a rich peninsula and rewarded by a beneficent

monarch, he generously forsook all the advantages of a splendid fortune, acquired by his valour and conduct, to restore unfortunate Princes to their hereditary dominions, and to establish a lasting and glorious peace in these Eastern regions where he had so often gathered laurels. But after all these memorable deeds and the great honour bestowed upon Zadi who achieved them, love, that passion of noble souls, has superseded all the aspiring thoughts of Ambition. Zadi has seen Mirza and since he beheld her angelic face has not enjoyed a moment of repose and happiness. Though perhaps his fortune and reputation might have influenced, in Europe and Asia, several charming women to bestow on him the most endearing marks of their affection, he has not a single thought or sigh left for them. The dear lovely Mirza fills the whole capacity of his mind, his heart and his soul. She is the universe for him and could Zadi flatter himself to find this irresistible charmer propitious to his vows, he would think himself the most happy of the creation to lay at her feet and her disposal all the wealth and grandeur he is possessed of. He shall not rest till he knows the ultimate resolution of the fairest under the sun. And as a state of suspense and uncertainty in love is perplexing beyond description, Zadi entreats the admirable Mirza to favour his impatience with an answer. May gracious heaven inspire her to restore to his distracted soul its former tranquillity. Leave the answer where you find this indirect declaration. It will come safe into Zadi's hands.'

The lady "easily guessed the author and though she did not think it proper to make any inquiry to know how Zadi's affecting tale had been introduced into her bed chambers,

she naturally thought the agent had contrived to bribe some of her female attendants. In order to be rid of Zadi's importunities, and that he should not attribute her silence to a favourable disposition towards him which modesty did not allow her to manifest, she sent the following spirited reply :—

"Mirza, born of honest and industrious and creditable parents and brought up under their eyes in the invariable measures of virtue, would not have taken the trouble of answering Zadi's Oriental hyperbole, however exalted his station may be, had she been certain he would have interpreted her silence as the contempt, she holds in, his assurance and his presumption. She has no aspiring views, especially of the dishonourable kind, beyond the mercantile profession of her father, and scorns the allurements of fortune, acquired by plunder and devastation, when affixed to seduce innocence and sully an untainted reputation. If Zadi's active genius and talents for war can no longer shine in the field, let him encourage the arts of peace and restore in a pacific administration peace and plenty to distressed millions. True heroes indeed should be the friends, not the destructors, of the human race : if Zadi will appear in that light to the present generation and to posterity, he must, I believe, write himself the history of his boasted exploits. Dastardly sovereigns have been subdued and dethroned by fraud and injustice and their miserable subjects, oppressed by merciless ravagers, give them now the monopolized products of their own country. Mirza shall not attempt to follow Zadi through dreadfull scenes of carnage and desolation, of tyrants deposed and others substituted in their place. If his fame in Europe and Asia is justly acquired, and his warlike exploits have been

exerted in support of the rights of mankind and not suggested by ambition and avarice, time will show. As for titles and honours, they are so often bestowed on the unworthy that they cannot be pronounced the rewards of true merit and honour. May Zadi convince the Indians by his disinterestedness and humanity that he came to protect, not to oppress, them. If they enjoy a temporary peace, they experience all the horrors of famine and lawless extortion. Let Zadi rest himself under the shade of his laurels and not aim at the disgrace and infamy of respectable families. True and sentimental love is indeed the passion of noble souls, not that brutal instinct which would seem free to unlawful dying (?) innocence and virtue. Mirza wishes Zadi may enjoy his usual repose and injure no more a person whose conduct deserves his respect. She leaves to the daughters of prostitution to be dazzled by Zadi's fortune and splendour and heartily despises Zadi and his offers."

The Auohor writes :—

"This answer put an end to the noble lord's correspondence, which he never after attempted to renew. This allegorical declaration of love and the lady's answer have been given to me by one of her intimate friends and with her knowledge. This happened in the beginning of the year 1766; if the reader has any doubt about the authority of both, the lady, who now lives in the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square, would, if necessary, commission her friend to assert that this is an exact copy of the original letters.

"There were several instances of both white and black women in Bengal who rejected his offer with disdain and exposed him to the ridicule of the world."

to do anything to further his own interest.* Under such circumstances it was impossible for him to have effected any reforms, although he might have been willing to do so.

The inland trade regarding which the Directors of the East India Company wrote so strongly, because the manner in which it was being carried on inflicted tyranny on the people of the country, was not abolished or its evils removed. No; if anything, he made matters worse by giving the monopoly of the salt trade to the servants of the

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The author then goes on to give a number of anecdotes, which it is not necessary to refer to here.

* Mr. James Mill in his history of India truly observes:—

"Other acquisitions come subsequently to view. Notwithstanding the covenants executed by the servants of the Company, not to receive any presents from the natives, that Governor had accepted five lacks of rupees during his late residence in Bengal from the Nawab Nujum-ud-dowla. It was represented, indeed, as a legacy left to him by Meer Jaffer, though all indications pointed out a present, to which the name of legacy was artfully attached. At any rate, if any sums might be acquired under the name of legacies, the covenants against receiving presents were useless forms."

Vol. III, pp. 304-305, fifth edition.

Company.' In his letter of the 30th September 1765 to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, Clive wrote :—

"The regulation now established for the Salt Trade, will, I hope, be entirely to your satisfaction. I at first intended to propose, that the Company and their servants should be jointly and equally concerned in the trade itself; but upon better considerations, I judged that plan to be rather unbecoming the dignity of the Company, and concluded it would be better that they should give the trade entirely to their servants, and fix a duty upon it for themselves, equivalent to half the profits. This duty we have computed at the rate of thirty-five per cent for the present, but, I imagine, it will be able, next year, to bear an increase."

If there is such an exorbitant duty on salt, an article not of luxury but of prime necessity, so that it presses heavily upon the people of India and also makes them liable to many diseases, it is due to the rapacious policy of Clive, who wanted to benefit his own Christian compatriots at the expense of the heathen inhabitants of India.* Regarding the monopoly in the trade of betel and tobacco, Clive wrote :—

* The Court of Directors repeatedly wrote to abolish the monopoly in salt and trade in other articles. But the orders of the Court were deliberately set at defiance by Clive and other servants of the Company in India. Even

"The articles of beetle and tobacco, being of less consequence, and yielding much less advantage, the duties upon them, of course, must be less."

It should have been just the opposite way. Betel and tobacco being articles of luxury, rather than of necessity, should have been more highly taxed than Salt.

So take Clive in any light you like, he did nothing for which the natives of India can be thankful to him. He not only feathered his own nest at their expense, but also helped his countrymen to do so. His so-called reforms in the Indian

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after his return to England, Clive wrote a letter dated Bath, 14th November 1767, to the authorities of the East India Company, a few extracts from which are reproduced below :—

"The duty which I owe to the Company will not suffer me to be silent, on a subject wherein their interest seems so deeply concerned.

"I learn, and with surprise, that you intend to lay open the Salt Trade, receiving only a duty of ten rupees upon every hundred maunds, at the Collaries, or places where the salt is made.

"Permit me to repeat to you, that the trade in Salt was always a monopoly;.....The natives never had the advantages you now propose to give them, and will be greatly astonished at so unexpected and extraordinary an indulgence."

Administration were meant to benefit his own compatriots and not to alleviate the miseries inflicted on the Indian people by the unsympathetic Englishmen who were proving themselves by their deeds to be veritable "birds of prey and passage" in this country.*

He left India for good in 1767. We have no concern with his career subsequent to his retirement to England. Of course he played there an Indian "Nabob," which made him many enemies and eventually led to his impeachment.

He appeared before a Parliamentary Committee to explain his conduct regarding the political transactions which led to the establishment of the English rule in India.

His suicide was attributed by the superstitious

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* Mr. Mill writes :—

"Upon this, as upon his former departure, the regulations which Clive left behind, calculated for present applause rather than permanent advantage, produced a brilliant appearance of immediate prosperity, but were fraught with the elements of future difficulty and distress. A double Government, or an administration carried on in name by the Nabob, in reality by the Company, was the favorite policy of Clive ; to whose mind a certain degree of crooked artifice seems to have presented itself pretty congenially in the light of profound and skilful politics."

Vol. III, p. 305.

natives of England to the pricking of his guilty conscience—to his committing that forgery in deceiving "Umichand" and thus helping to found the British rule, to his abetting the assassination of Siraj-ud-dowla and Nejm-ud-dowla, and to his seduction of the wives of his many Christian friends and thus making their homes unhappy.

Clive was a very lucky man and was a favorite son of fortune. But he was unscrupulous, and in his nature gratitude had no existence. This alone can explain the low estimate he had formed of the character of the Indian Mussalmans for whom he had never a good word to say. Thus, to give one instance out of many, in one of his letters to the Court of Directors, he wrote :—

"The Moors are bound by no ties of gratitude, and every day's experience convinces us that Mussulmen will remain firm to the engagements no longer than while they are actuated by principles of fear, always ripe for a change whenever there is the smallest prospect of success"*

Of course, he judged the Mussalmans from his own standard and that of his own countrymen.

Economic Condition of Bengal.

Mr. Verelst succeeded Clive as Governor of Bengal. During the period of his governorship,

* Long's Selections, p. 151.

no political transaction of any importance took place. But his rule was not a long one. He resigned in August 1769 and was succeeded by Mr. Cartier, who made room for Mr. Warren Hastings in 1772.* From the date of the departure of Lord Clive to the appointment of Mr. Warren Hastings to the governorship, no political event of any momentous consequence worth recording occurred in Northern India. The stable condition of affairs enabled the servants of the Company to learn the business of the civil administration which the

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* Mr. A. F. Scholfield, in the preface to the Third Volume of *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, writes :—

"From the tangle of plot and counter-plot, of intrigue and suspicion, the personality of the Governor of Fort William in Bengal, to whom most of the letters in this volume are addressed or in whose name they were issued, does not emerge with any great distinctness. He was John Cartier, a man who had received the thanks of the Board for his services when Chief of Dacca, and whose administration was later to win the praises of Burke. In 1769 as Senior Member of Council he succeeded Verelst, the retiring Governor. His chief characteristics seem to have been caution and a capacity for agreeing with his Council. But the times needed greater qualities of leadership than were ever his; his name is hardly remembered now, and in the *Dictionary of National Biography* we shall seek for him in vain."

grant of the Dewany had imposed on them. The author of the *Seir* has described the manner in which the civil administration of the country was carried on. He writes :—

"The administration was settled in this manner, that Shytab-ray and Mahmed-reza-qhan, and Djeesaret-qhan, Bahadyr, should order all matters relative to Government and Revenue in the best manner they should devise for the Company's benefit ; but that twice a week everything that they should have settled, should be imparted at full length to the respective Englishmen, their associates, who should sign in those two days whatever should have been latterly transacted ; and that every receipt and expenditure of each district, after having been so signed by the Englishmen of those parts, should be transmitted by each Naib or Deputy to the Company's Registers of Calcutta at the end of each year. The affairs of distributive justice were left to the Daroga or Superintendent of that Department, with power to hear and determine in small matters, equitably and to the best of his judgement ; but affairs of importance were to be decided in the Naib's presence, and in that of the Englishmen, his colleague, for two days in each week, which days should be different from the usual justice days. In consequence of such an arrangement, business went on ; and the English commenced acquiring a knowledge of the usages and customs of the country. For it was a standing rule with them, that whatever remarkable they heard from any man versed in business or even from any other individual, was immediately set in writing in a kind of book composed of a few blank leaves, which most of them carry

about, and which they put together afterwards, and bind like a book, for their future use."*

This double system of Government produced the worst results possible. There was anarchy in the country, and life and property were not safe. The English were mainly responsible for bringing about this state of affairs in the country. The trade in important articles of prime necessity was monopolized by them ; industries were crushed and jewellery of gold and silver, as well as coined money of every description, were being taken out of the country by them Consequently there was scarcity of money in the country. No wonder then that society in Bengal was disorganized. Professor Seligman in his Economic Interpretation of History has truly observed :—

"We understand, then, by the theory of economic interpretation of history, not that all history is to be explained in economic terms alone, but that the chief considerations in human progress are the social considerations, and that the important factor in social change is the economic factor. Economic interpretation of history means, not that the economic relations exert an exclusive influence, but that they exert a preponderant influence in shaping the progress of society." (Seligman's Economic Interpretation of History, p. 67.)

The English tried to place the blame of the

* Vol. III, p. 25.

scarcity of money in Bengal upon the shoulders of others. Thus the Governor of Bengal in a letter dated 1st January 1764, wrote to the King of Delhi as follows :—

"May it please your Majesty, Meer Cossim has carried away with him the money due to the Imperial Court, which was collected in the Treasury, together with all the riches of the country."

But the scarcity was not due so much to the roguery of Meer Cossim, as to the misdeeds of the English. The manner in which the inland trade ruined the merchants of the country has already been referred to before. How the prosperous industries of Bengal fared at the hands of the English factors will be evident from what one Bolts wrote in a well-known work named "Considerations of the Affairs of the East India Company."

Bolts had to leave India about a decade after the battle of Plassey. He was a spirited man and he freely criticised the doings of the English in India, which gave great offence to the Anglo-Indian authorities of the day at Calcutta, who consequently ordered his deportation from India.*

Bolts' testimony is very valuable, because what he wrote was from personal experience.

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* Long's Selections, pp. 481 and 491.

There was the drain of silver from India, which was producing very serious results. The governor Verelst wrote in a dispatch to the Court of Directors :—

"Whatever sums had formerly been remitted to Delhi were amply reimbursed by the returns made to the immense commerce of Bengal, which might be considered as the central point to which all the riches of India were attracted. Its manufactures found their way to the remotest parts of Hindustan, and specie flowed in by a thousand channels that are at present lost and obstructed. All the European Companies formed their investments with money brought into the country ; the Gulphs (the two gulfs of Mocha and Persia) poured in their treasures into this river ; and across the continent, an inland trade was driven to the westward to the extremity of the kingdom of Guzerat.

"How widely different from these are the present circumstances of the Nabob's dominions ! Immense treasures have lately been carried out of the provinces by Meer Cossim, which may possibly be reserved as a fund to excite future troubles. Each of the European Companies, by means of the money taken up in the country, have greatly enlarged their annual investments without adding a rupee to the riches of the province. On the contrary, the increase of exports to Europe, has proved so great a restraint upon the industry of private merchants, that we will venture to affirm the balance from Europe, in favour of Bengal, amounts to a very trifling sum in specie. We know of no foreign trade existing at present which produces a clear balance in money, except that carried on with the

ports of Judda, Mocha, and Bassora, from whence not fifteen lakhs in bullion have been returned in the course of four years.

"When the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa came under your jurisdiction, they were much sunk in opulence, population, and manufactures, from their ancient importance. The almost continual irruptions of the Mahrattas, under the government of Alliverdy khan, and the avarice of the ministers under the supineness of Seraj-u-doulah, the necessities of Meer Jaffier, and the iron hand of the rapacious and bloodthirsty Meer Cossim, struck equally at the property of the rich, and industry of the poor, and while it reduced the one to indigence, compelled the other to seek safety in flight. If to these we add, first, the immense amount in specie & jewels to the value of between three and five crores of rupees secreted or carried off by Cossim after his several defeats had obliged him to relinquish all hopes of a reinstatement: 2ndly, the royal tribute of twenty-six lakhs and the expense of about twenty lakhs for a brigade, both paid annually out of the provinces, and consequently out of the sphere of our immediate circulation: 3rdly, the annual amount of our own, and the other nations' investments for which no value is received into the country: 4thly, the large exports of bullion to China and the different presidencies during the last three years; and lastly, the unavoidable misfortune and capital drain, the immense sums paid into the cash of foreign nations, for the bills on their respective companies; I say, the aggregate of these several exports must appear inevitably and immediately ruinous to the most flourishing state, much less be deemed tolerable to a declining and exhausted country! Yet it is in this situa-

tion the Court of Directors, and the nation in general, have been induced to, expect prodigious remittances in specie, from a country which produces little gold and no silver ; and where any considerable imports of both have, for a series of years, been rendered necessary to the trade of foreign Companies, by the general demands for draughts on Europe."

Wheeler writes that

"during three years the exports of bullion from Bengal exceeded five millions sterling, whilst the imports of bullion were little more than half a million. Meantime the rupee rose to an exchange value of two and six pence." (Early records of British India, p. 375).

Regarding the scarcity of coin felt in Bengal, the author of the *Seir* writes :—

"On this occasion it was observed that money had commenced to become scarce in Bengal ; whether this scarcity be owing to the oppressions and exactions committed by the rulers, or to the stinginess of the public expense, or lastly to the vast exportation of coin which is carried every year to the country of England, it being common to see every year five or six Englishmen or even more, who repair to their homes, with large fortunes. Lacs piled upon lacs have therefore been drained from this country ; nor is the cheapness of grain to impose on the imagination. It arises from nothing else, but the scarcity of coin, and the paucity of men and cattle. Nor are these deficiencies anything else, but the natural consequences of the non-existence of that numerous Hindian cavalry which heretofore used to fill up the plains of Bengal and Bahar, and which (reckoning

those in the Government service, as well as those in the Zemindary pay, together with the expectants and their servants) could not amount to less than seventy or eighty thousand effective men ; whereas now a horseman is as scarce in Bengal as a Phœnix in the world. The decrease of products in each district, added to the innumerable multitudes swept away by famine and mortality, still go on augmenting the depopulation of the country ; so that an immense quantity of land remains untilled and fallow, whilst those that we tilled cannot find a vent for their productions. And this is so far true, that were it not for the purchases of saltpetre, opium, raw silk, and white piece-goods which the English make yearly throughtout Bengal and Bahar, probably a Rupee or an Eshrefi would have become in most hands as scarce as the Philosopher's Stone ; and it would come to pass that most of the people newly-born would be at a loss to determine what it was which people called heretofore a Rupee, and what could be meant formerly by the word Eshrefi." Vol. III, p. 32 (Calcutta reprint)

Unfortunately at such a juncture a drought also happened which would not have produced famine but for the misdeeds of the factors of the Company. Along with this drought, an epidemic of smallpox also broke out which spared no age and no sex, thus causing a great mortality.

It is on the public records that on the appearance of the drought;

"Some of the agents saw themselves well situated for collecting the rice into stores ; they did so. They knew the

gentoos would rather die than violate the principles of their religion by eating flesh. The alternative would therefore be between giving what they had, or dying. The inhabitants sunk; they had cultivated the land, and saw the harvest at the disposal of others, planted in doubt—scarcity ensued. Then the monopoly was easier managed—sickness ensued. In some districts the languid living left the bodies of their numerous dead unburied".*

In their despatch, dated London, 18th December, 1771, the Court of Directors wrote to the Governor of Bengal:—

"We therefore shall not hesitate to declare,...that several of our Council.....and many of our servants in the different districts of the country, appointed as supervisors of the collection of our revenues, had in manifest violation of our orders, entered into a combination and unduly exercised the power and influence derived from their stations in order to carry on a monopoly in the several articles of salt, betelnut and tobacco; and that they had been so far lost to the principles of justice and humanity, as to include rice and other grain in the same destructive monopoly; by which an artificial scarcity was made of an article so necessary to the very being of the inhabitants."

So then for Bengal at least, the change of masters was not fortunate for its inhabitants.

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* Short History of the English Transactions in the East Indies, p. 145.

Errata Et Addenda.

Page 25 line 6 from bottom, for "policy of" read "policy he."
Page 49 after line 15 add:

The Eighth Duke of Argyle who was Secretary of State for India in the seventies of the last century wrote :—

"The demands these officers (Political Residents) have made on native governments, the interferences they have practised with native rule, the reports they have sent up of native abuses and native administration have been the usual and regular preliminaries of British annexation."

In his "Notes on Indian affairs", the Hon'ble Mr. F. J. Shore very truly observed :

"So extremely difficult is it to discover the slightest benefit arising from the establishment of Residents at the native courts, that there is even ground for the supposition that the measure has been adopted and maintained for the express purpose of promoting misgovernment and confusion in the different principalities, so as to afford plausible excuses and opportunity for our taking possession of them."

Page 51 line 9 from bottom, for "VIII" read "VII."
Page 62 line 3 from bottom, for "Christians" read "Christian."
Page 65 line 14, add the following footnote to Monsieur Jean Law :—

In the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Part I—History, Literature, &c., No. II., 1867, in the article "Notes on Siraj-ud-daula", according to Mr. H. Blochman *Law* should be *Las*. In the footnote on p. 89, he writes :—

"In all English Histories of India known to me, his name is misspelt Mr Law."

Page 65 line 22, for "Europeaus" read "Europeans."
Page 86 line 5 from bottom, for "the with" read "with the."
Page 141 line 5, for "H. C. Hill" read "S. C. Hill."
Page 162 line 8 from bottom, for "Enterning" read "Entering."
Page 201 line 14 for "Meer ham" read "Meeran."
Page 204 line 6, add the following as footnote to "doubt, bad."

If we are to believe some of the traditions current in Bengal, it was Siraj's immoral character which raised enemies against him, who conspired to bring about his downfall. Babu Kisory Chand Mittra, writing in the Calcutta Review (for January 1873, pp. 11-12), said :

"The son-in-law of Mahârânî Bhavani who had been entrusted by her with the management of the Raj, but who had died a premature death, had left his wife in the fulness of youth and ripeness of beauty. She was a woman of rare and lustrous beauty, and the news of it reached the years of Sirâj-ud-dowlâ, who longed to have possession of her person. The Mahârânî was paralyzed by astonishment and fears..... She took her daughter with her and fled to Benare. She left at night, in order that her retreat might be covered by the darkness....."

Again he writes in the *Calcutta Review* for July 1872 (p. 107) that

"The traditions current among the people regarding his (Siraja's) unparalleled cruelties, point him out as a monster in human shape. His seraglio contained an immense number of women purchased and decoyed from their houses. He took an inhuman delight in capsizing boats and drowning the passengers. His unbridled lust and terrible oppressions arrayed against him the secret but inveterate hostility of the principal members of the Government, and of the leading Rajas and bankers. The Rajas of Nadiya, Burdwan, Dinajpur, Bishnupur, Midnapur, and Birbhum, came to Murshidabad, and represented their grievances to Maharaja Mahendra, the Nizamat Diwan, who promised them redress, and they returned to their respective territories. He then represented to the Nawab the disaffection of his principal subjects and the ruin of the country caused by his unrighteous conduct, and urged on him the necessity and importance of following the righteous and lawful course. But his representations were utterly disregarded. Finding the Nawab was incorrigible he determined on the dethronement of His Excellency. With this view he convened a secret council at the house of Jagat Seth. Among those who attended were Raja Ramnarayan, Raja Rajballabh, Raja Krishna Das, Mir Jafar Ali, and Jagat Seth himself. Mahendra opened the proceedings by stating that he, as as well as the gentlemen present, had served the Subah faithfully and zealously, and been honoured and treated with marked distinction by the immediate predecessors of Siraj-ud-daula. But now they were no longer held in high estimation, and their interests, as well as those of the people at large, were being ruthlessly sacrificed to the caprice and cruelty of the reigning Subedar. He therefore requested the

council to favour him with their views as to what should be done. Raja Ramnarayan suggested that an agent should be deputed to Hastinapur (Delhi) to move the Emperor to recall Siraj-ud-daula and to appoint a new Subahdar. Raja Rajballabh was opposed to this suggestion; and expressed his opinion that, as the Emperor was of Muhammadan faith, he was sure to appoint another Muhammadan as their Subahdar, but that the Hindus could never practise their religious rites and ceremonies with impunity under a Muhammadan regime. This desultory conversation led to no definite result. But it was afterwards settled at the suggestion of Jagat Seth, that Maharaja Krishnachandra Raya of Nadiya, being a man of uncommon sagacity and powerful influence, should be summoned to the council, in order that he might give the benefit of his advice at this grave conjuncture. According to the author of *Krishna Chandra Charitra*, the Maharaja Krishna Chandra at first sent his Diwan, Babu Kali Prasad Singh, to know why he was wanted. On the return of his Diwan he himself proceeded to Murshidabad, where he first saw Maharajah Mahendra and Jagat Seth. He found the former very vacillating, and unwilling to embark in any enterprise against the Subedar. Krishnachandra tried to remove his doubts and overcome his fears, and assuming a firm tone expressed his belief that so long as the Muhammadan *regime* should last the Hindus could never expect to enjoy uninterruptedly the blessings of peace and the free exercise of religion. He therefore strongly advised that an application should be made to the English, who were settled at Calcutta, to expel the Muhammadans and assume the reins of government.....It was at last resolved...that Krishna

Chandra should proceed to Calcutta and invite the English to assume the government of the country. He lost no time in seeing Mr. Drake and delivering the important message with which he had been entrusted. .....The Governor cordially acknowledged the truth of everything he had heard, and promised his assistance. He said he would lose no time in communicating with the Chief Officers of the Hon'ble East India Company in England, and so soon as the result of the reference was known, he would adopt the necessary measures for the expulsion of the Muhammadans. About this time Siraj-ud-daula, as if to hasten his downfall, made a demand on the English for a larger revenue than that which they had hitherto paid. The Governor resisted the demand, but the Subedar repeated and insisted on it. Another cause which expedited the extinction of the Muhammadan power in Bengal was Raja Krishnaballabh being disgraced by the Nawab, his leaving Murshidabad and taking shelter at the English settlement in Calcutta. The Governor assured him that he was perfectly safe at the settlement, and that he might remain there as long as he liked. The Nawab having heard of the circumstances wrote to the Governor to send up to Murshidabad, Krishnaballabh, the son of Raja Rajballabh, as a prisoner in irons. The Governor refused to deliver him up. The Nawab wrote again and again to the same effect but his demand was refused. The exacerbation of feeling thus produced on both sides, brought on hostilities....."

Page 210 line 14, for "and" read "a."

Page 211 line 6, for "would possible," read "would be possible."

Page 224 line 13, for "or Muxadavad" read "of Muxadavad."

Page 290 line 3, for "3rd" read "6th."

Page 300 line 6, for "investitute" read "investiture."

Page 320 line 2, for "treatened" read "threatened."

Page 332 line 2 from bottom, for "391–390." read "390–391."

Page 361 last line, for "he good" read "the good."

Page 431 line 4 from bottom, for "his death war" read "his death was."

Page 439 line 14 from bottom, for "The Auohor writes" read "The Author writes."

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